

Social inclusion of Roma men and women in Serbia



Hilfe zur Selbsthilfe



Research Results:

“Social inclusion of Roma men and women in Serbia with particular regard to the self-employment programme implemented by Help in Serbia”

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ANALITICAL REPORT

Social deprivation of Roma is not characteristic for Serbia alone. In almost all European countries there is a problem of social deprivation, discrimination and marginalization of Roma. The European Union has initiated a recommendation for all the countries of Europe to formulate specific national strategies for Roma integration. After the Roma Decade (2005) and in line with the goals of social inclusion of Roma an „EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies¹“(NRIS) was formulated. As its integral part, four key areas were defined in which the progress should be achieved with the purpose of improvement of Roma inclusion: education, employment, housing and health care. When it comes to Serbia, in the National Strategy for Roma Inclusion ² it has been emphasized that over 60% of Roma in Serbia lives in poverty. There are two key factors which are generators of social deprivation of Roma and those are the low level of education and unemployment. These two problems are strongly correlated; hence, a low level of education is one of the key impediments to employment. Concerning education, it has been pointed out in the Strategy that over 26% of Roma are not educated at all. About 28% of Roma has completed the elementary school, while the secondary school is completed by 9%. Speaking about the employment, the estimation is that only 27.2% of Roma are economically active, or more precisely, 58,2% of the active population (p. 25 of the Report). It has also been pointed out that there is institutional discrimination towards Roma in terms of employment. National Employment Service does not have the accurate data on the percentage of unemployed Roma. It has been pointed out that the National Employment Action Plan within the Roma Decade has not been systematically implemented. This is the reason why Roma are mostly engaged in the grey economy. It is stated in the Strategy that the two key reasons of Roma social deprivation are: low level of education and skills, and discrimination that exists by the majority. One of the key priorities identified by the Strategy is the “integration and reintegration of Roma within the labour market”. Achievement of this objective is encouraged in several ways, one of which is the self-employment of Roma. Thereby, it is insisted in the Strategy that any employment program

Social inclusion of Roma is an integral part of the agenda of all the EU countries, and the inclusion problems are similar in almost all of them .

Key issues of social inclusion of Roma in Serbia are the lack of education and unemployment.

¹http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/roma/eu-framework/index_en.htm

² STRATEGY FOR IMPROVEMENT OF THE STATUS OF ROMA IN THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA, Belgrade, 2010': <http://www.inkluzija.gov.rs/wp-content/uploads/2010/03/Strategija-EN-web-FINAL.pdf>

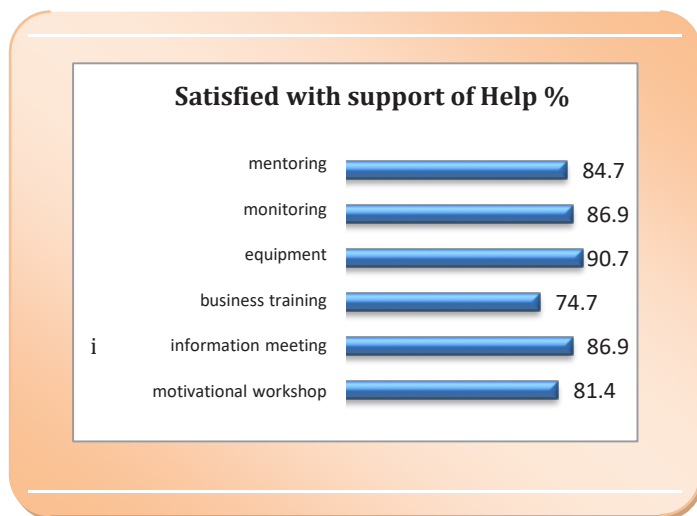
should include an educational component in order to help strengthening the capacities of Roma in terms of education and professional qualifications.³.

In accordance with the above mentioned problems of Roma men and women in Serbia, Help has implemented a program of self-employment, which precisely aims at accelerating the social inclusion of Roma through the self-employment program. The secondary objective of the program was to enhance professional qualifications of Roma men and women, as well as to raise overall capacities for social inclusion. Accordingly, the program itself is in line with the recommendations of NRIS and the National

Help program of self-employment is aimed at enhancing the social inclusion of Roma men and women with direct support in establishing their own enterprises.

Strategy for Roma integration. After the implementation of self-employment program there is a question of evaluation of the effects of the entire program. The assessment of these effects can provide important information concerning the further implementation of this and similar programs. On the basis of complex research that was carried with this objective in mind, we have reached certain finding to which we pointed out in a research report, which we specifically underline in this analytical summary report.

When it comes to the Help program, through the research we have primarily found out that there is a high level of beneficiaries' satisfaction. Having in mind that the Help program included a large number of components, beneficiaries satisfaction is on a high level by all the individual components. Comparatively, we found that the slightly lower level of satisfaction with Help program is in Krusevac compared to other municipalities and this is especially true when speaking about business training



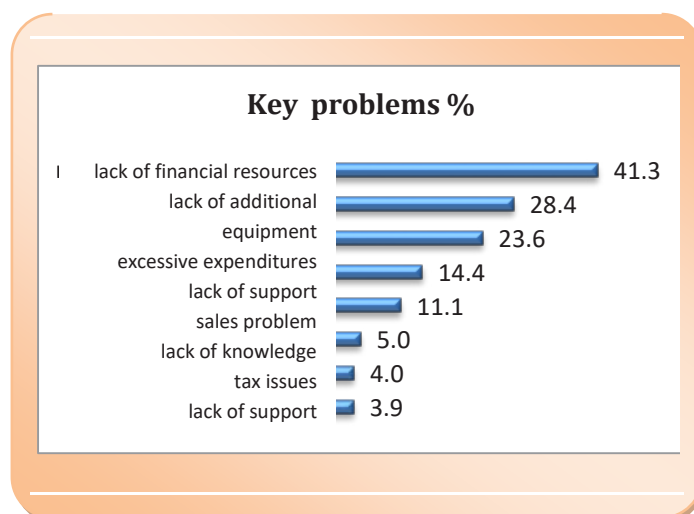
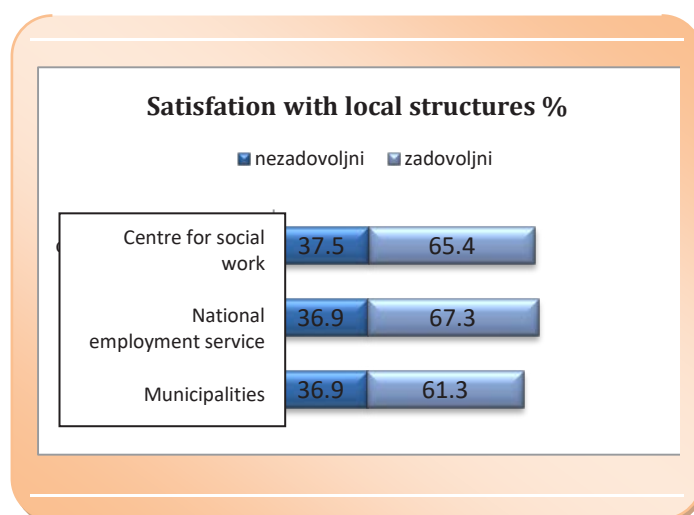
³ Two directly Help self-employment program related Strategy 'recommendations:

- 1) Professional training should be focused on the professions that are needed in the local market.
- 2) There should be work on formalising the labour-law status and employment of collectors of recyclables.

Satisfaction with the results of start up businesses is also on a very high level. . The highest number of beneficiaries is very pleased with the results of the businesses they have launched. In this respect, the highest level of satisfaction with the results we found in Prijepolje, and the lowest in Krusevac and Pozarevac. Also, male program beneficiaries are more satisfied than female beneficiaries of the program while in relation to the business activities we have found the lowest level of satisfaction with the results of the business activity in the agriculture sector, due to the seasonal character of this business activity and its revenues.

During the period of establishment of business, as well as in the period of its implementation, the program beneficiaries have exercised the necessary cooperation with the local authorities. Essentially, this cooperation is achieved with the municipal administration, the National Employment Service and the Centre for Social Work. The research results indicate that the local government was the most cooperative in Leskovac considering that the beneficiaries from this municipality are the most satisfied with cooperation with all local stakeholders.

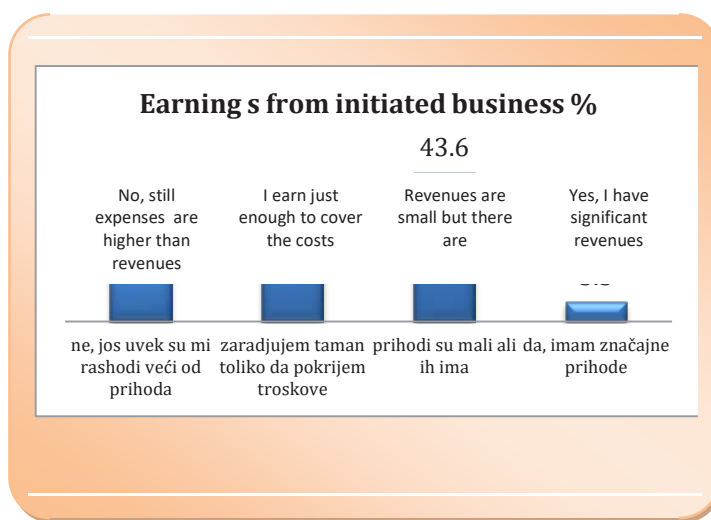
There are three key problems identified by the beneficiaries, and according to significance they hierarchically go in the following order: lack of financial resources, lack of additional equipment and excessive costs. If, in a long term, the business is profitable, it can be expected that the beneficiaries will be independent and able to maintain business without additional resources. This is especially due to the fact that the vast majority of



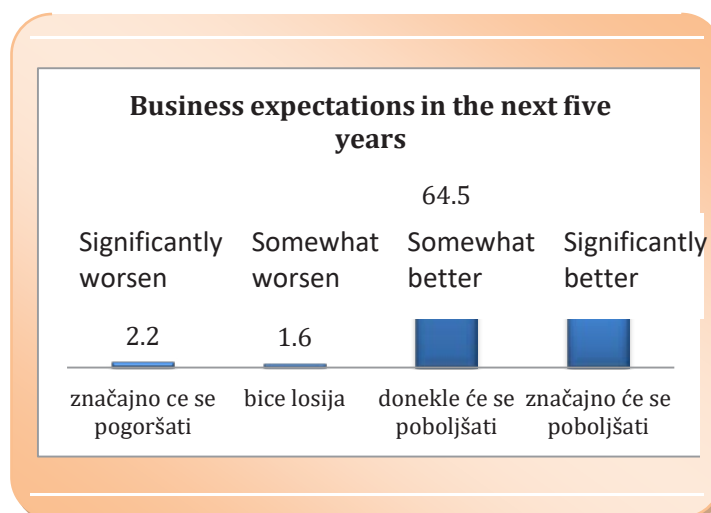
beneficiaries reported that their business revenues are larger than expenditures (if revenues are not really big). The key is that in most cases the beneficiaries of the program point out that they have no problems with the sale of goods / services, and this is a key factor of market valuation and sustainability of the business.

If we speak about the problems of business maintaining, we emphasize that the problems are most pronounced in agriculture and that Roma report the difficulties to a greater extent than Roma women.

With regard to the income earned from the initiated business, most of the beneficiaries reported that they generate the revenues. Beneficiaries in Vranje reported that they generate significantly higher revenues compared to beneficiaries from other municipalities while in Prijepolje revenues are at the lowest level. When it comes to the activities, the highest income was realized in craftsmanship while the least profitable are the businesses initiated in agriculture. Finally, men earn higher income than women.



An important fact is that the vast majority of beneficiaries have high expectations of the initiated business. Therefore, we have found a high level of optimism through the research. Beneficiaries from Leskovac have particularly high expectations, while the lowest level of optimism is measured in Krusevac and Prijepolje.



When speaking about the specific benefits of self-employment program, the biggest benefit identified by the beneficiaries is the improvement of the financial situation. Accordingly, the importance of other forms of support is diminished compared to tangible benefits.

By comparing the self-employment program beneficiaries with Roma men and women who did not participate in the program (control group), we have determined significant differences that indicate the effects of the program in aspects that are not directly of financial / material by nature, but they are more related to the overall capacity building of Roma in order to foster the social inclusion. First of all, the beneficiaries of Help program have significantly more positive attitude towards work, and they are satisfied with the job they are doing to a significantly greater extent in comparison with control group of Roma. Interestingly, Roma women are in this regard more satisfied with the business comparing to Roma men. Self-employed Roma are, to a greater extent, identified with the work they perform, but in relation to Roma from the control group they also have a stronger confidence to control and manage their lives. Furthermore, Help program beneficiaries recognized the importance of the self-employment when it comes to acquiring the social capital, which is a very important factor of social integration.

Help program has strengthened Roma when it comes to their social capital, attitudes about work and working, and a sense of control over their lives.

Help program has achieved certain effects through strengthening the capacities of beneficiaries in terms of gender equality. The key is that, in this respect, from the point of carrying out the family roles as an aspect of gender equality, the self-employment programme had an affirmative role to men who are gender-sensitive in this regard.

Help program has strengthened the capacities and sensitivity of Roma men and women when speaking about gender equality.

Roma men and women who participated in the Help program are considered to have significantly better treatment by the majority of the population, therefore, the self-employment program strengthens the confidence in the social community and by doing so it strengthens the social inclusion.

Roma men and women, Help self-employment program beneficiaries, point out positive perception within the community thanks to the self-employment.

We have also found out that there is a significantly higher level of social trust among Help program beneficiaries. Namely, raising the interpersonal trust level, as an aspect of social capital, is a significant effect of Help self-employment

Help program has contributed the Roma social inclusion by increasing the interpersonal trust level among the beneficiaries.

program. But, we have notified that male beneficiaries of the program express a higher level of interpersonal trust compared to women. Therefore, the program has not, in this aspect, strengthened women as social actors.

Finally, the research conducted on the entire population of citizens of Serbia indicates that there is social distance towards the Roma, and that Roma are generally discriminated in Serbia. However, it is important to point out that although the percentage

In general, Serbian citizens consider Roma discrimination very pronounced.

of distancing in relation to the Roma is high, if compared with the degree of distance towards other socially marginalized groups, this degree of distance is not very pronounced.

However, the citizens of Serbia clearly identify that the highest level of discrimination against Roma is expressed in terms of employment, and, if judging by the attitudes of the majority of population, the one of the key problems of Roma population are actually the job opportunities and employment. The lack of education and professional training are stated as the most important reason of difficult Roma employment. Consequently, the citizens of Serbia believe that the crucial thing in facilitation of the employability of Roma is to provide the quality training of Roma which would enable a higher level of competitiveness in the labour market. In addition to high quality training, the citizens of Serbia consider that it would be very important for the state to implement the measures to mitigate the prejudice against the Roma, given that these prejudices are the second most important factor that influences the employment of Roma men and women.

The highest level of Roma discrimination is expressed in employment, hence Roma men and women need vocational trainings to resolve this problem.

Finally, the representatives of local self-governments in which the program was implemented, have a very positive attitude towards the realized self-employment program. They point out to which extent the program affirmatively acted to Roma involved in the program, both in terms strengthening their material/financial situation as well as from the standpoint of the overall strengthening of their social capacity. In the future, we would recommend continuing the self-employment programs and activities aimed at motivation, information dissemination and skills improvement through relevant education and professional trainings.

The representatives of local self governments consider Help program had affirmative effect on the Roma social inclusion.

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