

BABEŞ-BOLYAI UNIVERSITY
FACULTY OF SOCIOLOGY AND SOCIAL WORK
DOCTORAL SCHOOL OF SOCIOLOGY

PhD THESIS

ROMA PEOPLE

between social inclusion policies and barriers to social exclusion

- Thesis Summary -

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Cluj Napoca

2019

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Keywords: Roma communities, social exclusion, social inclusion, Local expert on Roma issues, local intervention projects, local action plan for Roma, European projects, national strategies for Roma, local policies for Roma's.

CHAPTER 1 Introduction

The main objective of the present research project starts from the identification, through the prism of the Roma experts, respectively the majority of the broad social problems that affect the inclusion of the Roma people in Romania in the current period and seek to identify the causes that obstructs, respectively stimulate the efficient application of the local policies of social inclusion. The approach materialized in this paper, also aims at a practical purpose, by analyzing the development of local action projects and developing a set of tools to favour their implementation. The proposed analysis aims to address the social issues of the Roma in its complexity and to propose recommendations, starting from the interdependence of the main problems faced by the Roma communities, in order to obtain long-term results for the members of the entire community. In order to carry out the research, I processed information accumulated as a result of previous studies in this field, but also many documents of some local intervention projects in favour of the Roma communities. In addition to the information and data, the experience of my participation in the administration and development of programs and projects that targeted the Roma population was very important in designing the field research. These previous experiences were the ones that underpinned the motivation and premises of the research and, together with the other data sources used, represented the starting point for the operationalization of the selected topics and the elaboration of the project of the present research.

One continuous step in this process was the documentation. In this stage of office research, theoretical data sources have been identified, which may represent benchmarks in the validation and completion of data collected through the proposed field research. In order to have an overview of the researched situations, but also to argue the issues arising in the research, part of the analysis of the stakeholders involved in the social inclusion of the Roma. There were analyzed, on the one hand, local and national and European strategies, on the other hand, documents such as needs sheets, local and county action plans for Roma, local development strategies, local budgets, decisions of local councils.

Part I. CONTEXT AND CONCEPTUALIZATION

CHAPTER 2 Risk factors for the Roma population

Since 1995, Romania has registered the most significant number of Roma people in Europe. According to a report, the Roma population in Romania was approximately "1,800,000 to 2,500,000 people, and at European level, the approximate number was between 7 million and 8.5 million people" (Liegeois and Gheorghe, 1995, p. 4). At the last census, the one in 2011, 621,573 citizens declared themselves to be Roma, compared to 535,140 declared at the previous census, a decade before. Taking into account the fact that some Roma's self-declare belonging to the Roma's ethnic group, estimates of some institutions and organizations double this figure, unofficially considering the number of Roma as varying between 1.2 and 2.5 million (Romanian Government, 2014).

As it has been documented in the researches of the three decades that have elapsed since the change of the communist regime in Romania, and at present, the Roma population is forced to face multiple obstacles and constraints, which prevent them from accumulating the human capital needed for to participate in the labor market and to generate economic gains (Robayo-Abril, Millan, 2019).

Poverty is a factor that negatively influences inclusion and amplifies the difficulties that exist among Roma communities in the process of accessing educational resources. In this regard, it is noted that "60% of the Roma population in Romania, had a low power of covering food on a daily basis, a double percentage of that registered to the non-Roma's population" (World Bank 2011, p. 7). According to recent European data, the poverty of Roma children is twice as high as that of the majority children, being 78% compared to 39% (FRA, 2018).

The Institute for the Study of the Problems of National Minorities (Horvath et al., 2017), highlights in a research report made at national level that in Romania "39.1% of the beneficiaries of the minimum guaranteed income are Roma families, and the most affected. the area is the Center region, where 69.8% of the beneficiaries of minimum guaranteed income are Roma people" (Horvath et al., 2017), p. 60). According to Sandu (2005), one of the causes of the poor health of a significant percentage of the population is the precarious living conditions. The unfavourable health is an effect of the poverty that the Roma face. This situation arises in the context of the existence of a vicious circle of poverty and due to the fact that the Roma

population is experiencing low levels of education, very limited employment opportunities. Historically, inequalities regarding social position, and at the same time housing, poverty and education led to an unequal start of Roma in the labor market, leading to low participation of Roma in the labor market and thus to a greater dependence on social services. (Ringold, Orenstein, Wilkens, 2005).

The *inequalities between the Roma and the other ethnic groups* have historical origins, starting from the position of slavery of the Roma on the estates of the Orthodox Church, respectively of some boyars (Fraser, 1995). These historical inequalities were transformed in time, but did not disappear with the granting of equal rights for the Roma population. Today, discrimination based on ethnicity is considered as one of the most important barriers for Roma communities, in trying to access different resources such as education, jobs, property and identity documents, housing, public services, credits, services of health. A recent report by the World Bank from 2019, highlights issues regarding poor housing in Roma, including overcrowding, below the minimum standard accepted by the majority population, to which is added the fear of forced eviction, as these Roma communities live with insecurity because many of their homes do not have ownership documents or building permits (Robayo-Abril, Millan, 2019).

Starting from the historical inequalities regarding the Roma that have targeted the lack of property, one of the aspects that make the situation of Roma difficult today is the positioning of their communities, which often takes forms of residential segregation, with consequences regarding educational segregation, access to medical and social services, but also of participation in the labor market and social life. On these issues, in the report elaborated at national level by ISMPN in 2017, it is emphasized that “out of the 2,225 compact communities analyzed in the report, 49.6% are positioned on the outskirts of the localities. To these situations are added 71 situations in which these communities are outside the locality and 63 situations in which the village, the village is inhabited by Roma. In total, the 3 variants total 391,929 persons” (Horvath et al., 2017, p. 96). According to Sandu (2005), an important source of income for the Roma population is the guaranteed minimum income. Thus, 74% of the Roma population, obtain income from these financing sources. The lack of real income for these people, can then generate other difficulties in the process of accessing educational services.

Regarding the progress in the field of *education* for Roma children, research has shown that despite many programs focused on the school inclusion of Roma children, there is still no talk of success, the legislation favouring inclusion and the programs developed cannot yet counterbalance the masses of masses. social, cultural and economic, nor the discriminatory attitudes manifested in education. (Roth, & Moisă, 2011). Regarding the number of graduates, in a research report, it is noted that in the rural communities defined as marginalized, "the adult people being represented by 80% have graduated at most eight classes, and 35% of them have only the primary school" (Teșliuc, Grigoraș, Stănculescu, 2016, p. 27).

The relationship between the lack of education and the lack of jobs for the Roma population, is analyzed within a national report. In the report published in 2015, between the causes of absenteeism and the precarious level of education, the inadequate living conditions, food and poor health are identified. All these causes lead to a very limited number of qualifications and even the existence of some forms of discrimination, in the attempt of the Roma's to find jobs. These serious problems lead to "lack of secure and well-paid jobs" (MMFPSPV/AM POSDRU, 2015, p. 49). A relevant aspect emerged from the analysis of the factors that affect the quality of life of the Roma population is that as long as the local resources (especially the financial ones), which must be distributed by the local authority, for both the majority population and the Roma population, are limited or are the chances of progress in the process of social inclusion, considered deliberately limited, remain very limited from the perspective of the long-term impact. Then, due to the fact that the Roma population faces major difficulties and barriers both in accessing education, jobs, obtaining identity and property documents, from the perspective of the negative effects, there are situations of improper housing, but there are also situations of discrimination and segregation. In this respect, it would be necessary to pay particular attention to the choice of approaches regarding the social inclusion of Roma, precisely so that the results are visible, concrete in the Roma communities and, above all, they are maintained for the longest time.

CHAPTER 3 Conceptual and theoretical delimitations

In the context in which the approach I propose in this paper has a strong applicative dimension, the presentation of the concepts with which I operate, as well as of the theoretical approaches, will focus on the relevant aspects that configure the concrete modalities of intervention in supporting the social inclusion of the Roma. From this perspective, concepts

such as those of social exclusion and inclusion, poverty, community, family and the theoretical approaches that operate with these concepts, will be presented and related from the perspective of the relevance of their use in describing and analyzing the situation of the vulnerable Roma population.

In Romania, *absolute and relative poverty* is calculated according to a method developed by the experts of the World Bank, the Commission on Anti-Poverty and Promotion of Social Inclusion and the National Institute of Statistics, approved by the Government in 2005, for which the calculation basis is the family budget survey. For example, in 2016, the National Institute of Statistics highlighted in a report that "in 2016, the highest poverty rates were registered in the North-East regions (36.1%), South-West Oltenia (34.2%) and South-East (31.2%), and the smallest in Bucharest-Ilfov (10.2%)" (Iagăr, INSSE, 2016, p. 14). Regarding the Roma population, in 2013, the World Bank points out that they are at a risk of poverty ten times higher than the majority population.

The sphere of the *concept of poverty* has changed, by changing the approach, from the absolute one, to the relative one. An important step in this transformation of the concept is the social definition of poverty, in the classical form, that of Townsend: "Individuals, families and groups in the population can be said to be in poverty when they lack the resources to obtain the types of diet, participate in the activities and have the living conditions and amenities which are customary, or are at least widely encouraged or approved, in the societies to which they belong." (Townsend, 1979, p. 29).

The perspective of *social exclusion* is broader than poverty and covers several dimensions: access to education and health resources and services; housing; participation in the labor market and social life. Besides the multidimensionality, the approach from the perspective of social exclusion has the characteristics of a dynamic approach to the problem of vulnerable people, the emphasis being placed on both the factual situation and the process of social exclusion, carried out over time. Berting and Villain-Gandosi (2001) show that the theoretical roots of understanding social exclusion lie in classical sociology. In Max Weber's work, the idea of poverty, refers to the ways in which certain groups succeed through a process of "social closure", to secure and maintain their privilege to the detriment of other groups, whose members differ from their own members.

Sen (2000) makes a distinction between *active and passive social exclusion*. He explains the emergence of active social exclusion as being due to the actions of the state, by limiting some legal rights and opportunities, and passive social exclusion as appearing when for example there is a crisis of jobs due to labor market deficiencies. The same author points out that the lack of equal access to accessing jobs can lead to the adverse inclusion process. From this perspective, the author emphasizes that this *unfavourable inclusion* is part of the broader concept of social exclusion.

A number of *resources are needed* for socially excluded people to help them overcome this crisis. The resources needed to get out of the area of social exclusion are considered very important by Hetzler and Marcus (2006). Thus, in a research, the authors highlighted that for a person to be able to move from a level of exclusion without resources (A), a situation that leads to vulnerability, to a level with resources (B), a situation which reduces the vulnerability and will then enable this person to support himself / herself. As such, it is necessary for people to have access to a variety of resources, so that they can access the labor market and become independent.

In 2011, McGarry described the *concept of exclusion of Roma* through the phrase "they belong to no one", and Nordberg (2006) defined this concept by the fact that exclusion describes the perpetuation of denial of citizens' rights, focusing attention on institutionalized discrimination. A common denominator of these definitions of social exclusion is that Roma are socially excluded because they face a set of problems that differ considerably from those faced by the majority population. Thus, a series of authors Sigona and Vermeersch (2012), highlight the situations of spatial segregation, discrimination, low levels of education and intergenerational poverty. In 2014, the World Bank highlights that the Roma population is a "large, young and particularly poor ethnic minority group, facing exclusion from the labor market and certain services (World Bank, 2014, p. 8). Regarding the issues regarding Roma exclusion, the National Agency for Roma highlights that "Due to the lack of human and material capital, the compact Roma communities and the institutions that serve them - school, dispensary - operate with limited resources, in a perpetual crisis situation. The risk of marginalization due to the more difficult access to certain services, in the case of compact Roma communities, is high" (ANR, 2014, p. 15). The precariousness of human capital negatively enhances the life chances of the present generation, but also of the next generation. According to Sandu (2005), besides the precarious living conditions, due to the very poor quality of the infrastructure, and

the marginalization, including, spatial, in the segregated residential areas in which they live, the situation of the Roma is also characterized by the lack of human capital resources as a result of relatively low educational and migration experience.

In many cases, Roma exclusion is associated with marginalization, which can take very visible forms in many of the localities where compact Roma communities live. Visible, they are the poor infrastructure, the houses built from improper and unfinished materials - although they are inhabited, in many cases being overcrowded, the lack of access to infrastructure and basic public utilities. Studies, such as those mentioned above (Horvath et al. (2017), Anton et al. (2014), Tesliuc et al., (2016), identify a variety of Roma communities, which can be poor, compact, vulnerable, segregated, marginalized, or having no problems with poverty, communities from urban or rural areas. On these empirical definitions regarding Roma exclusion, Kostka emphasizes that these "politically accepted definitions legitimize a certain course of action" (Kostka, 2015, p. 10).

In my PhD thesis, I will refer to the *vision of Commins* (1993), who talks about four systems and their importance in analyzing the phenomenon of exclusion. First, it is about the democratic system, which refers to civic integration and implies that every individual is an equal citizen in a democratic system. Thus, each individual irrespective of his or her membership (eg ethnic, religious, etc.) has equal rights in relation to the others and social institutions equally. Secondly, the aforementioned author talks about the labor market which has the role of promoting the economic integration that gives the individual the opportunity to be active in the labor market, by taking a job that offers him financial stability and the possibility of meeting the needs in the labor market in the order of their importance. Third, Commins (1993) talks about the welfare state system, which has the role of promoting what can be called social integration and which refers to the access that the individual has to the social services provided by the state and how this access takes place empirically. The fourth system mentioned by the author is that of the family and the community, being the system that promotes interpersonal integration that implies belonging to a family, a group of friends, neighbours, to interpersonal networks that provide moral support to those who have need them. In Commins' view, all four systems are crucial in the normal functioning of individuals within society. As long as one or more systems do not function optimally, inherent social imbalances will occur and complex social phenomena will occur that will affect the well-being of individuals. In the case of the present work, this perspective that Commins has on social exclusion is important, as the Roma

are in the prism of their historical settlement in a position of socio-economic vulnerability. If we are to analyze the situation of the Roma from the perspective of the functionality of the four systems, the perspective is not a favourable one.

With regard to the concept of *social inclusion*, the authors Woodward and Kohli (2004, p. 19), emphasized that this “concept should not be seen as the other side of a coin” which should include both exclusion and social inclusion. The authors point out that the theoretical and scientific discourse should go further, referring to the aspects that may constitute the prerequisites for eliminating exclusion. The concept of social inclusion should be perceived as a distinct concept, which significantly highlights the social integration, by strengthening the capacity of social institutions to include the Roma population. Regarding the aspects related to the process of social inclusion, within an article (Marushiakova-Popova, 2005), it highlights the fact that this process needs to be analyzed also from the perspective of past experiences, from the regions and localities in which they live. In the case of Romania, the analysis should also refer to the socialist era, a period in which for the Roma population, more integrative actions of the mainstream kind were implemented, when the social actions for integrative purpose did not exclusively target the Roma population.

The *community approach to social inclusion* is very important lately, both for researchers and for the social actors involved in different actions of social inclusion. In this regard, it is emphasized that in this process of community development it is necessary to include as many target persons as possible, but other interested actors from the locality or localities of reference must be involved. Thus, from the perspective of social inclusion, in the process of community development, Henderson (2005) emphasizes that political and administrative decision-makers might be interested in the process of improving local situations, precisely because they should be interested in strengthening the neighbourhood through regeneration and social inclusion programs. The more involved these local authorities are, the greater the chances that social inclusion will have better results. In addition to this process of involvement in the process of community development of local actors, DeVault (2008) considers that in the process of social inclusion it is necessary to promote the application of concepts such as equal opportunities, non-discrimination, full participation, job security and especially in the initial phase it is possible to identify the barriers and eliminate them.

CHAPTER 4 Strategies and agents of the social inclusion of the Roma population

In Chapter 3, I present the European and national programmatic documents that promote the Roma social inclusion policies. In the first part are highlighted international and European documents (National Plan for Combating Poverty and Promoting Social Inclusion (2002), Lisbon Treaty (2007), Decade for Roma Inclusion 2005-2015 (2005), European Platform for Roma Inclusion (2009), Europe 2020 Strategy (2010), etc., with relevance in the process of social inclusion of the Roma. In the same sense, I highlight and relevant aspects of the National Strategy for the Improvement of the Roma Situation (Romanian Government 2001, 2006, 2011; 2015), as a national document based on the actions of national and local actors in this process, European and international recommendations, which are largely unitary as approaches to the practical implementation of the current objectives of the European Union, can be interpreted by to the Member States as "constant pressure", and "difficult to put into practice". But I think it is necessary that the strategies, the national plans reflect these objectives, not only by "empty content", promises without substance, but also by concrete and long-term actions. I believe that these actors at European and international level have and must play decisive roles in the process of social inclusion of Roma in the future. The implementation role rests with the Member States and especially the authorities, a role that is not emphasized according to the expectations of the European actors or the Roma communities. Although there are a number of European and national strategic documents in the field of Roma inclusion, the transition from situations of "creating vulnerable groups with intent", to the situation of "ensuring unrestricted access to all local opportunities and resources for everyone," including for the Roma“ I think it has not yet been successfully achieved by many European countries, including Romania as a member state of the European Union.

Part II. EMPIRICAL RESEARCHES

The main elements studied in this research refer to the problems faced by the Roma population, but also to the identification of possible actions and recommendations that will lead to the improvement of these problems. The present analytical approach aims to identify possible recommendations for the improvement of these problems, from the perspective of the possibility of involving the local authorities in the process of social inclusion of the Roma communities.

The character of this study is an exploratory one. For each of the studies proposed in this chapter, I present goals and objectives, the target groups, the research questions, the main dimensions of analysis, the presentation of the methods and techniques used.

The collection of the information needed for the study was carried out from a mixed methodological, quantitative-qualitative perspective. The argument for which I chose this perspective is the possibility given to the researcher to analyze in detail the difficulties that the Roma population faces but also to outline the perception of the respondents regarding the possible actions that will improve the poverty status of the Roma communities and in which they will be involved local authorities.

The main aims of the empirical research included in the paper are to identify and analyze the risk factors that influence the occurrence of the phenomena of social exclusion in which the investigated Roma population is, but also the detachment of directions of action and recommendations, which can lead to the efficiency of the inclusion social process for this population.

The specific objectives pursued are:

1. The analysis and identification of the processes of social exclusion and inclusion of the Roma communities from the perspective of 4 main dimensions: the application of the measures of social policies to ensure the welfare; participation in the labor market; civic participation in social life; the fairness of applying the legal dimension to the framework.
2. Analysis of the possible directions of action and recommendations regarding the improvement of the process of social inclusion of the Roma communities for the local authorities.

In this sense, in the exploratory approach, the quantitative data, collected by applying questionnaires with standardized response variants (which included, but also questions with multiple and open response variants), were supplemented with data from the qualitative analysis, obtained by interviews with institutional representatives, at local level and with external community facilitators, involved in the ROMACT¹ program, which I mentioned earlier in this paper. The analysis of the perceptions of the investigated institutional actors, both from

¹ See Council of Europe, ROMACT Program Page, and Available at: <http://coe-romact.org/country/romania>

the quantitative and qualitative methodological perspective, also concerns their direct interactions with the Roma communities in which they operate. The way of relating also involves the degree of involvement in concrete local development activities, from identifying the problems of the Roma communities, to identifying the solutions and implementing the measures through concrete actions, at the community level. The perceptions and expectations identified in the quantitative approach are supplemented by the analysis of social documents and the qualitative analysis. Thus, these data are supplemented with concrete data concerning the activity of the stakeholders involved in the social inclusion of Roma, at local level, starting from the existing human resources, attributions, and a way of relating with the local institutions, with the local community and with the Roma families.

CHAPTER 5 Analysis of the development of inclusion programs for Roma people

In the first part of this chapter, I highlighted a series of European-funded programs from Romania's pre-accession and post-accession periods to the European Union, precisely to highlight the steps taken by Romania in the process of Roma inclusion. In the same context of the actions implemented by Romania, I highlighted the importance of the existence of a method of elaborating the local action plan for Roma, as a tool for local policies. In this approach, I also highlighted the role of local experts on Roma issues in the process of local development of Roma communities. Starting from the experiences accumulated as a project manager for Roma inclusion, I have often reflected in the adequacy of the resources allocated and their use in the priorities and complex problems of the Roma communities.

The main purpose of document analysis such as (research reports, project and program fiches, occupational standards, needs identification sheets and local action plans) is to analyze how the project documents can support the Roma inclusion process and then to identify possible ways of analyzing the problems faced by the Roma population but also possible ways of improving social exclusion situations and solving problems. In this chapter, I highlight the problems faced by these communities, resulting from the collection of data from official documents at national level and then documents from some local town halls such as the identification sheet of needs and local action plans. They have, elaborated by 20 local town

halls, who participated in the process of external support provided by the ROMACT program team.

Specific objectives are:

- Documenting the ways in which the projects carried out within the PHARE programs and from the Structural and Cohesion Funds, have contributed to the identification of the problems that the Roma population faces from the perspective of housing, health, education, employment and infrastructure.
- Documenting the opportunity to elaborate a financial map of the possible investments that would target the problems of the Roma population locally.
- Identify possible funding sources for these problems.

Research questions

- How can the project documents bring a surplus of knowledge to solve the social problems that Roma population face?
- How can project documents better contribute to identifying the needs of the Roma population and solving them?

When I use the phrase "financial map" I think of drawing an overview of the situation of Roma communities. In the first phase, I identify the problems of the Roma communities. In the next phase, I analyze how procedurally and legally, they can be brought to the "priority list" of the local authorities, by assuming by the local town halls the local action plans. An important aspect highlighted is what is to be done by the local authorities, what estimated costs should be allocated by the local authorities to solve these problems. For these possible actions, I analyze what would be the stages of implementation of such a process, considered difficult, but also what sources of funding can be accessed by the local authorities in order to solve the problems faced by the Roma communities.

Dimensions analyzed

After completing the process of completing and approving the local action plans for Roma with budget projection and budget classification, in order to understand the complexity of the problems faced by the Roma population in the 20 localities, I tried to analyze a series of information from the sphere of housing conditions, infrastructure, education, employment, property documents within the identification sheets of the needs and of the local action plans

for the related Roma community. Regarding the accuracy of the information in these documents, there were situations in which the working teams approximated certain data, such as the length of roads, the total number of dwellings or the total number of dwellings without property documents, the actual number of the Roma population, but at level of analysis, the data obtained largely reflect the reality in the Roma communities and these data can be used to build a coherent image to propose different concrete and visible future actions.

Data collection methods and tools

According to Chelcea (2001, pp. 467-470), he analyzes the situation in which the researcher must carry out a process from the knowledge of the "trace" to the knowledge of the "fact" from the document to the social reality. The author specifies that these “traces” can be as direct as a building, an industrial installation and which are the result of human activity, but also indirect traces such as written texts, documents, documents. With regard to texts and documents, the author lists a number of situations such as personal, private, official documents and points out that for example documents issued by public institutions can be classified into official written documents.

The collection of information in this section of the research was done, using the method of analyzing social documents (research reports, project and program files, occupational standards, the identification sheets of needs and local action plans). These official documents are prepared by the local town halls and are public.

Analysis results

From the table below (Table 6), it appears that for the 17 localities for which the analysis process was carried out, investments of over 10 million euros would be required. According to the legislation in force these amounts should be insured from the local budget or attracted from other sources of financing by the local town halls.

FINANCIAL MAP on development investments from the Local Action Plans for Roma

Table 6 List of problems and financial projections for these problems

Investment objectives collected from all 17 local action plans for Roma	Estimated amount in RON	Necessary for living SF, DALI, PT
Schools - Repairs / upgrades / equipping Schools	1,800,000	YES
Kindergartens - Repairs / upgrading / equipping kindergartens	300,000	YES

Playgrounds - Repair / modernization / construction of playgrounds	1,100,000	YES
Social centers - Repairs / modernization of social centers	3,000,000	YES
Housing - Land purchases for a house	800,000	YES
Housing - Housing construction	20,000,000	YES
Housing - Repair / modernization of houses or blocks of flats	10,000,000	YES
Repair / construction / replacement of water sewerage system with pumping stations	2,200,000	YES
Public lighting - Repairs / Modernization of public lighting system	400,000	YES
Natural gas - Natural gas supply in localities	600,000	YES
Sewerage - Domestic sewage and connection of housing with pumping station	1,000,000	YES
Environment - Implementation of the flood prevention system	650,000	YES
Bridges and bridges - Construction / modernization of bridges and bridges	700,000	YES
Streets - Repairs / Modernization of roads	6,000,000	YES
Total amount in RON	47,550,000.00	
Total amount in Euro (Euro = 4.40 RON)	10,709,000.00	

Source - analysis performed by the author based on the analysis of the identification sheets of the local needs and action plans

In this analysis on the 17 local plans, which contain budget projections and budget classification, but also received formal approval from the Local Councils and understanding the process of accessing the possible sources of financing, we found that:

- For the 17 local town halls for which the support process for the elaboration of local action plans has been carried out, after the external support process has been carried out, there is a real interest in accessing the funding sources and that they want to increase their level of involvement in the social background inclusion process of the Roma.
- The most important barrier identified in this work process was related to a consistent resistance in the allocation of costs from the local town halls for the elaboration of the technical documentation Feasibility Studies (SF) or the Documentation of approval of the intervention works (DALI) for such investments, relying on the fact that substantial amounts cannot be identified for such service costs and that other investments would be priority for which such technical documentation is necessary. Many people in the town halls have stated that in the local budgets there are such amounts allocated for the costs of technical documentation elaboration services, but for other investments already included in the local budgets and not for the investment proposals proposed for the Roma in the plans.

CHAPTER 6 Policies for Roma from the perspective of local experts on Roma issues. Quantitative research

In the quantitative research component, I analyze the expectations and proposals of local experts on Roma issues regarding the process of social inclusion, but also the ways of approaching the process of social inclusion existing at local level. In the same research chapter I analyze what might be the main elements needed to improve the involvement of local authorities in the process of Roma inclusion. The data collected in quantitative analysis, on the one hand, concern the perceptions of the local experts for Roma regarding the problems of Roma people who form the Roma communities, in the context configured by the problems they have in their daily lives and on the other hand, the identification of the problems is complemented with perceptions and expectations of the local experts for the Roma on the efficiency of supporting the process of social inclusion, of the concrete ways of realizing these steps, of the actors involved, and of the related responsibilities.

The purpose of the quantitative analysis on the data collected through questionnaires addressed to the local experts for Roma is to identify prevailing situations of social exclusion and inclusion of Roma at the local level and possible actions to improve the situations of social exclusion and problem solving.

Specific objectives:

- I. Identification of perceptions of local experts for Roma regarding the situation of Roma communities from the multidimensional perspective of social exclusion;
- II. Identification of perceptions and expectations of local experts for Roma on support actions, at local level, to combat social exclusion and to solve Roma problems;
- III. Identifying the expectations of the Roma experts regarding the concrete implementation, through local actions, of the Europe 2020 Strategy, respectively of the Government of Romania's Strategy for Improving the Roma Situation.

Methods and tools for data collection - For the quantitative research in this doctoral thesis, I used the method of sociological inquiry and the instrument used in the collection of data from the quantitative perspective is the questionnaire with questions with standardized answer variants, which also included questions with multiple variants or open response.

Target group - The group of respondents in the quantitative research is made up of 74 persons having the role of local expert on Roma issues, or an employee of the town hall to exercise responsibilities with emphasis on Roma issues.

The quantitative data collected through the application of questionnaires, were supplemented with qualitative data, obtained through interviews with institutional representatives, at local level and with external facilitators, involved in the ROMACT program, which I mentioned earlier in this paper. The perceptions of the investigated institutional actors, both from the quantitative and qualitative methodological perspective, also concern the direct interactions with the Roma communities in which they operate. The way of relating relates to the degree of involvement in concrete local development activities, from identifying the problems of Roma communities, to identifying solutions and implementing measures through concrete actions, at the community level.

The results resulted from the quantitative analysis

Tasks of the local expert

When asked about the delimitation of attributions concerning individuals, respectively, families, Roma communities, less than half of the respondents identify in their job descriptions explicit attributions regarding working with Roma families. In the context where the activity of local experts is currently more focused on working with individuals in the family, from the perspective proposed in this paper, changes are needed regarding the occupational standard of this occupation and promoted and actions that will be outlined later in the job descriptions of local experts on Roma issues.

Ways of working with the Roma population

Although most respondents consider working with the Roma family to be very important, less than one third of them say that when they work with the Roma population, they address the family as a whole and almost half of the respondents (47%) states that there was no frequent way of working with the Roma population.

Most of the attributions related to the Roma family, identified by the respondents are similar to those previously identified, for the Roma population in the locality, in general. Some of these are translated from the individual to the family level. Of the 74 respondents, a number of 42 respondents who identified service attributions also in relation to the Roma family. 17

identifies attributions that can be considered specific to addressing Roma families, in total, 17 identifying 30 such attributions.

Expectations of local experts on the social inclusion of Roma

Another important result of the quantitative data analysis is the way in which the respondents assign, in different ways, the responsibilities in solving the Roma problems, at the level of the local public authority, respectively, at the level of the Roma communities. In the opinion of the local experts for the interviewed Roma, the school and the integration on the formal labor market represent the most important decisions at the community level of the action.

Regarding the most important actions that adults from Roma communities need to take, in order for their families to get out of poverty, the expectations of experts on Roma issues are not specific to the Roma population. The respondents consider that the Roma population does not necessarily have to immigrate to another country, in order to make it better and they nevertheless believe that it is better for the Roma population to leave the marginalized communities and to live together with the other families in the majority population. Of great importance for the respondents is the education of the children, operationalized in keeping the children in school for the long term by the Roma, as well as accessing a stable job by the adults from the Roma communities. Although local experts on Roma issues, consider that residential segregation *produces very great barriers in the process of social inclusion*, however, they do not consider that leaving Roma in another country is the solution to solve the problems they face. The answers regarding the priority areas of the action of the local decision makers, for which it is considered necessary to access external funds, are significantly different from those regarding the areas considered priority to be addressed through actions of the Roma communities. Problems such as infrastructure in the areas inhabited by Roma, on the one hand, segregation and discrimination, on the other hand are the two categories of problems *considered important to be solved with the support of the local administration*. In addition to addressing the problem of ethnic discrimination, local experts express important expectations regarding the problems of the Roma in terms of increasing the quality of the population of the Roma population, but also, at the same time, the spatial disintegration in relation to the majority population, these being in perimeter with the majority population.

CHAPTER 7 Involvement of local authorities in inclusion policies for Roma. Qualitative analysis

Through qualitative research, I set out to identify the relevance of an external development support initiative for the local town halls and the Roma communities, which will lead to the increase of their level of involvement and the efficiency of the social inclusion process of the Roma. Starting from the direct experience of being involved in this project, I set out to identify the main actions taken, how this process of external support was implemented, challenges existing, the results obtained and the recommendations proposed by these people involved. The European Commission and the Council of Europe are partners in this important program, being implemented by the latter. As part of this program, I was involved as an expert in the period 2016-2018. During this period, together with the program team, I had the opportunity to work with 23 localities, in which external development support was offered for the local town halls and for the Roma communities.

The specific objective of this analysis aims to analyze the impact of this external support from the perspective of increasing the level of involvement of local stakeholders, as well as of the members of the Roma communities, as a necessary condition for the efficiency of the Roma social inclusion process.

The main premise from which we left for the qualitative analysis is that the level of involvement of local authorities, in the process of social inclusion of the Roma, can increase if these authorities benefit from external support in the field of community development and writing European public funded projects. To begin with, I would like to clarify the "external support" dimension used especially in this section of the qualitative analysis. I use this phrase, in the sense that this support is granted to a mayoralty and this support from outside it, from different programs (eg the ROMACT Program) or different social actors involved in the process of Roma inclusion. I use this phrase in comparison with the dimension "internal support" in the sense that this kind of internal support is implemented by the employees of the mayoralty for all the locals, including the Roma communities living in that locality.

Research questions

Starting from the direct experience of the involvement in the aforementioned external support program, I set out to identify the main actions taken, how this external support process

was implemented, the existing barriers and challenges, the results obtained and the recommendations proposed by these people involved. As such, I aimed to find out what are the difficulties and barriers faced by the local town halls in the process of social inclusion of the Roma and how they can be improved with external support.

Dimensions analyzed

The qualitative analysis is focused on 6 main dimensions:

- (1) Collaboration between the town hall and the community before the external support process;
- (2) The main actions regarding the external support process granted by the program;
- (3) The key actors involved in this process;
- (4) Difficulties, barriers, problems and solutions;
- (5) The importance of the ROMACT external support process;
- (6) Recommendations regarding the continuation of the work process at local level;

These dimensions, I operationalized in questions addressed to the respondents.

Methods and tools used in qualitative analysis

Based on an interview guide, data were collected through interviews conducted with two categories of respondents:

- 6 individual interviews with representatives involved in the ROMACT project:
 - 2 persons from the management level of the ROMACT program from the Council of Europe;
 - 4 community facilitators from the program. The experience of the respondents (facilitators) in the ROMACT projects covers 15 localities from 9 counties in the Central, North West, West and South West Oltenia regions.
- 4 individual interviews with institutional representatives, employed in the local town halls of 4 localities, in which this support program such as Cugir, Târnăveni, Vulcan, Gherla took place.

For each of these interviews, I developed a set of questions. Through these questions, I tried to capture the main areas of qualitative analysis.

The target group was made up of 10 persons involved in the process of implementing the ROMACT program, as follows:

- 6 individual interviews with representatives involved in the ROMACT project:
 - 2 persons from the management level of the ROMACT program from the Council of Europe;
 - 4 community facilitators from the program. The experience of the respondents (facilitators) in the ROMACT projects covers 15 localities from 9 counties in the Central, North West, West and South West Oltenia regions.
- 4 individual interviews with institutional representatives, employed in the local town halls of 4 localities, in which this support program such as Cugir, Târnăveni, Vulcan, Gherla took place.

The results of the qualitative analysis

In the qualitative analysis I found that the support, from outside, of the local authorities, respectively of the local communities in the process of social inclusion of the Roma, can lead to a substantial increase of the knowledge, but especially of the interest and the level of involvement of the local authorities in the process of Roma social inclusion. Through the expertise provided, this external support can bring in certain situations a number of major results in local communities. However, in situations where this external support has not been fully accepted by the local town halls and / or by the local communities, the proposed results are either obtained in the longer term or are not the expected ones.

The external team, which offers this external support must have qualified human resources both in the process of community facilitation and as a support component in accessing funding sources. In the period of granting external support, it is necessary to have, at the same time, public or European sources of funding such as European funds, Norwegian funds, central level funds or funds from local budgets. In addition, these local communities need to be supported in attracting these sources of funding, especially where there is no specific expertise. The stages of external support must be clearly defined. External support must be granted and adapted according to the specificity of each locality. The methodologies and working documents used by the external team can be taken over by the local team to ensure sustainability. In order to increase the efficiency of the external or internal support process, it can be proposed that in

defined periods of the process, the level of involvement of the local authorities and the Roma communities can be measured. For this process of measuring the level of involvement, I consider that a multidimensional approach is needed, to measure this interest, with each dimension being associated with measurable indicators, which will target: the human resource involved, the working documents used as the local action plan, development strategies, local budgets, procedures and laws used - carrying out concrete actions.

CHAPTER 8. Conclusions and recommendations

8.1. Conclusions

In the following, I will try to intersect the perspective of the local experts, on the one hand, with that of the local facilitators, respectively, of the representatives of the Local town halls, interviewed in the qualitative research, on the other.

I mention that the two perspectives are complementary and, although I did not intend to validate the data collected from the quantitative perspective, with the interview data, the research results are reinforced and complement each other in the process of deciphering the mechanisms and actors that make up **the inclusion process**. On the other hand, both types of data concern, although, to varying proportions, the relevant aspects operationalized on the two dimensions of the involvement of the authorities mentioned above.

Multidimensionality and severity of problems. Both from the perspective of the facilitators and representatives of the interviewed city halls, as well as from the local experts who replied to the questionnaire, regarding the identification of the problems of the Roma communities, problems are identified that concern all the dimensions of social inclusion, even if in varying proportions, but they are perceived as serious and persistent, in particular, problems related to poor infrastructure, poor housing, and discrimination. The data collected from a qualitative perspective, reveal the perception of the importance of the active involvement, on the one hand, of the local authorities, on the other hand, of the Roma communities, *in the process of social inclusion*.

Evaluation before the start of the social inclusion process. In the analysis, it is highlighted that if, at the local level, a common interest in the problems of Roma cannot be formed, then this local development process is difficult and cumbersome with a risk that at any time it will cancel the external support process offered. In the same context, if a local

development process is subject to failure or semi-failure, then it is very difficult to resume such a process under optimal conditions. This is why an external team that brings in community facilitators and experts can be an obvious starting point. Thus, if a process of external support is proposed at the level of a locality, then this working team must analyze the power and collaboration relations existing between the local authorities and the Roma community, their capacity to understand and implement the process, the experiences and expertise of the key persons involved, the time allotted by these persons from local authorities and local communities, the adaptation of work programs. I believe that all these aspects need to be considered both in the case of the existence of an external support process and in the case that this process is carried out without support from outside the local community.

Another important conclusion, drawn from the analysis of the perception of the institutional actors involved in the process of external support is highlighted by the fact that the actions carried out at the level of the *Roma communities must be analyzed by the local authorities according to their specificity*, of the existing problems, but especially of the *resource potential, institutional resilience and then the potential for change*. There may be situations where the economic potential of a locality may be very high and then, the amounts from the local budget may be consistent, or there may be localities where the economic potential of the locality is very low and then the amounts existing in the local budgets are limited and, as such, the allocation of resources by local authorities may be very different. In the same context, in the localities where the economic potential is higher, it is easier for Roma adults to access better paid jobs. Likewise, the human resources at the level of the town halls may be better prepared, with the expertise in different fields and then the access of financing sources for the development of the locality may be higher, but the level of discrimination in such developed city halls may be maximal. Depending on the specificities of these localities, *the activation of the Roma communities* may be different. For example, there may be situations where the phenomenon of migration may be accentuated, or for people, it is necessary to ensure their daily life and they cannot participate in the community actions provided for in an external or internal support process. Other aspects that can highlight the diversity of situations existing in localities can also be highlighted.

The main social actors involved in the social inclusion process for Roma. From the perspective of the decision at the local level, regarding the activation of the teams by the employees of the local town halls, in the process of social inclusion it has emerged that the

mayor is the most important local actor. The mayor can have a very strong influence for approving, not approving the local action plan but also for allocating costs in the local budget and for the areas where the Roma live. In the analysis, we found that the political influence exists at the level of the local council and of the town hall, can have both positive and negative effects. Among the main actors of this process, there are *local experts on Roma issues*, as well as other persons with specific responsibilities, such as health mediators, school mediators, etc. They need to know the working process very well, especially in situations where they coordinate this process in the absence of an external support process. They need to have sufficient power and a clear mandate from local authorities and Roma communities to be able to carry out a process of activating local synergies. But the most important aspect, which results from the qualitative research, is the one related to the existence of the will of the authorities and of the Roma communities to be an active part in this process. The responsibilities and the "areas" of the intervention are different. Roma communities are considered, as a priority, responsible for improving access to education, health services and quality employment, while local representatives of the Roma, together with the representatives of the local authority, are perceived as the main people responsible for solving the infrastructure problems, on the other hand those related to discrimination and segregation. Both categories of data collected reveal the perception of the perceived importance of the working documents used in the process of Roma inclusion: the local action plan, the development strategies, the local budgets.

Human resources involved in the social inclusion process for Roma. For the success of a *process of social inclusion*, the human resources allocated in the process by the local authorities and the Roma community are considered as important. For this, there is a need for openness and a common will. The data of the quantitative research reveal important aspects related to the *categories of participants involved* in the elaboration of the Local Action Plan for Roma, by diagnosing the local problems of the Roma. Along with the institutional representatives with a predefined role in the social inclusion of the Roma, the City Hall, in particular, through the mayor's person, represents the categories of participants considered to be the most relevant in making these local diagnoses. Both categories of people interviewed by the two methods of data collection emphasize the importance of the mayor, as a decision-making factor, in all phases of the social inclusion process of the Roma.

The financial resources needed to be allocated in the social inclusion process for Roma. It is necessary for the local authorities to understand that the problems of the Roma are

not only of the Roma communities but are, first and foremost, the problems of the local administration which is responsible, according to the laws, to provide resources and support to all the inhabitants and not just a part of it. It is necessary that this responsibility and legal responsibility be in accordance with the laws in force, which must be respected. In this sense, the administrative tasks would need to be transposed into reality for the entire population of a locality and the local or external financial resources would be distributed evenly. As part of an external support process, it is recommended to analyze this human resource at local level and then, depending on the specificity of each locality, to carry out actions of local debates to coagulate a common interest.

The urgency of local investments. However, in the qualitative analysis and in the analysis on the local action plans (document analysis), we have emphasized that in all the supported localities, *massive investments are needed integrated in the fields such as infrastructure, housing, health, education, jobs, training professional, documents of property and identity, etc. In addition, ethnic discrimination as well as residential and educational segregation must be taken into account.* For all these actions, it is necessary to identify sources of funding, but also to have *a high dose of acceptance and tolerance.* In the qualitative research, we have found that the periods of implementation of such actions can be very long or short term and depend first of all on the local will but also on the existing procedures for implementing such actions.

Documents, laws, procedures and strategies used in the social inclusion process. *The local action plan* proposed by the ROMACT method, contains all the budgetary chapters within a local budget and a period of implementation of 3 financial years is proposed. The actions foreseen in these strategic documents, should have an echo and be taken over in the local budgets and in the strategy of development of the locality. Knowing that the allocation of local budgets for the investment component (development sections) is limited, it is necessary for local authorities to access external financing sources. In the situation where the interest and the will of the local authorities would be as great, both for the majority population and for the Roma communities, then such documents as the identification sheet of needs and the local action plan would not make sense. Because, then, in the process of developing the development strategy and the multiannual local budgets, the responsible teams from the city halls would pay equal attention to all the problems in the locality. But until then, these working documents can provide a concrete framework for analyzing problems but also for solving proposals.

However, data analysis shows that the *local budget* is the most important document to be followed in the analysis within the external or internal support processes. In this sense, both in the initial phase of an inclusion process, but also during the implementation process, it is necessary to analyze the budget chapters and from the perspective of the allocation of costs in the development sections of the local budgets and for the areas where the Roma live. Thus, the local action plan should be constructed in such a way as to identify sources of financing from the local budget or from external sources for as many actions as possible. I think that if in the local budgets (the development section) analyzed, it is found that for the areas where the Roma live, there are very few or no budget projections, then the interest, the level of involvement, the local authorities are non-existent or very limited. In an initial analysis for a support process, this is where you need to start. From analysis to a local budget. This is why the local action plan for Roma is important, but not essential. The most important document at local level remains the local budget, because it should reflect the interest and will of the local authorities. In the qualitative research, this aspect was highlighted precisely that is, it is necessary that the priorities of the Roma communities, be in line with the priorities of the local authorities and must be found both in the local budgets and in the local development strategies.

Both the data of the qualitative research, the analysis of documents, as well as those collected through a questionnaire addressed to the local Roma experts, highlight the importance given to the *procedures, the laws used in the process of social inclusion and then the possible sources of funding*. For example, it was pointed out that the procedures regarding the implementation of projects from structural funds are cumbersome and difficult to understand for applicants who have no such experience. These implementing procedures provided for in the contractual documents, reveal that it is necessary that each of the actions carried out in projects should be proved with many supporting documents. This process can very often lead to the fact that the project teams have to pay more attention to these supporting documents, to the detriment of the effective actions with the target groups. These existing situations can demotivate local authorities to implement such projects that target the Roma population as a target group. In the context of the projects for the Roma population, to be implemented by the local authorities, it would be necessary to have procedures of implementation that are simpler to understand and to implement and that really lead to visible results in the community. In the qualitative research, but also in the case of the analysis of the documents, it was highlighted that, although there are a number of legislative documents at national level in the fields of

housing, property documents, infrastructure. These documents are difficult to implement locally. Then, the process of social inclusion can be very cumbersome, time-consuming, but also human and financial. In the context in which all the situations at local level are urgent, then the problems of the Roma can be "set aside" and no longer a priority for the local authorities.

The sustainability of these actions of inclusion is very important and should be ensured for as long as possible, just for these actions to take effect. In the qualitative analysis, it was emphasized that, the results can be observed and measured in time, after the completion of the projects. It was also observed that there were several localities, in which the support process was completed in the first phase and then it was necessary to resume this external support process, because in these localities, there are European projects in place or for monitoring and implementing local plan actions of the local authorities. This is why this sustainability component is just as important as the actual support process.

The comprehensive, systemic approach to the inclusion process. Another conclusion drawn from the qualitative research, the analysis of the documents, reinforced by the results of the quantitative research, also shows that *an individual approach to a single problem, cannot ensure the poverty of the people living in a Roma community spatially and socially marginalized.* From the perspective of the analyzed data, responsibilities are shared between the subjects of social inclusion, viewed at the level of individual, family or community of Roma, on the one hand, respectively, relevant actors in the process of external support, on the other.

The relevance of the external support granted to the authorities in the inclusion process. An important conclusion, in the order of the research approach, that we have proposed is that the external support can considerably increase the level of involvement of local authorities and Roma communities in the process of social inclusion. This process may be more efficient and with a stronger impact, as compared to a social inclusion process carried out without external support. This process is necessary to approach participatory and to have a series of well-defined stages, but to adapt according to the specificity of each locality. For this process it is necessary to have local will. The external support process may increase the chances that local resources will be distributed to the Roma communities as well, but it depends to a large extent on the funding sources existing at that time. After the support process is completed, the responsibility for continuing the actions remains with the local authorities and the Roma communities.

8.2. The limits of research

One of the limitations of the research is that the *data collected and analyzed do not include a very large number of localities analyzed*, compared to over 1500 localities, at national level, where the existence of the Roma communities is identified and then they cannot highlight a predominant situation of social exclusion or inclusion in the localities of Romania and in which the people formed in compact Roma communities also live. In order to identify a predominant situation, it would be necessary that at national level, all localities in which such communities exist are to participate in such an analysis. However, keeping the analysis methodology from the perspective of the 4 dimensions such as the welfare state, the labor market, the civic-social, legal-legal sphere and the risk factors analyzed within the first chapter of the doctoral thesis, such a one could be achieved analysis to determine which of these situations predominates and then, in the knowledge, the local authorities to be more involved in this process.

The quantitative data collected refers, on the one hand, to perceptions and expectations of local experts for Roma, as employees of the local town halls as well as representatives of the Roma communities to which they belong. Data were also collected on the problems the context configured by the problems of the communities in which they live. However, I would like to point out that *these perceptions and expectations of the respondents can change over time* depending on several aspects such as the period in which these data are collected, the replacement of the respondents with other persons, who can then have more or less experience and expertise in the field of Roma inclusion, their personal and professional experiences in the collection process, the change of the organizational culture of the local town halls, the number of respondents included in the analysis, the frequent political changes (change of the mayor and the composition of the local council) at the level of the local town halls, the existence or the absence of European or public funds for Roma during the data collection period. In this regard, it is possible that another current exploratory approach will highlight other relevant issues (expectations and perceptions) for respondents regarding issues or recommendations regarding the Roma population. On the other hand, the identification of the problems is complemented with perceptions on the efficiency of supporting the process of social inclusion, of the concrete ways to realize these steps, of the actors involved, including the Roma living in the Roma communities and of the related responsibilities. In the first phase of the quantitative analysis, I

proposed to collect data from as many respondents as possible, but for different reasons, some of these people did not respond to my request.

Another limitation of the research is that *no data were collected from people living at the level of Roma community*. Without denying the importance of Roma perceptions on their own problems, the quantitative analysis I propose will focus, in particular, on the perception of local experts for Roma, as relevant local actors in any approach to social development, at local level, in the significant localities by weight of the Roma population. These perceptions, collected through a sociological survey based on questionnaire, will be analyzed on several levels of analysis. Probably, the results could be different if the group of respondents had on the one hand a larger number of respondents or if other categories of respondents such as school mediators, health mediators, employment agencies, social workers, and so on. In this respect, it is possible that, in a future analysis, I will be able to approach a group of respondents that will include more spheres of interest in the field of Roma inclusion and more professional categories.

The analysis proposed in this paper *concerns the complexity of the aspects that characterize the integrated or systemic approach on the entire Roma community*. Without neglecting the importance of categorical monetary benefits, such as allowances for children and those granted with means testing, such as social assistance and social services addressed to the vulnerable Roma population, the approach I propose is focused on aspects related to possible integrated actions of social inclusion for them, which can be achieved locally by the local authorities. When I highlight issues related to Roma communities or the people who form these communities in this subchapter, I refer to the typologies of communities that exist in a certain period of time within a society and specified in the specialized literature of the way of organizing, constitution type, provenance environment, power relations, differentiation of roles, life cycle. There is a current complexity of the forms / types of communities that are also implicitly found in the Roma communities.

8.3. Recommendations

Recommendations regarding the modification of the occupational standard for the local expert on Roma issues The possible change in the occupational standard for this occupation is also supported by the fact that 68% of the respondents say that for them it is very important to work with Roma families as a whole and 23% say it is important. In this respect, considering the process of modifying job descriptions for this professional category, it should start, if

necessary, from modifying / adapting the occupational standard for this occupation to the possible current approaches to inclusion for Roma. As a recommendation, from the perspective of improving the occupational standard of the profession of local expert for Roma, in the section on the main activities carried out by this expert, it would be useful to introduce the following sentence: In the process of social inclusion, this expert gives support to individuals, families, to the Roma communities served. For this support he collaborates with all the services and departments in the town hall but also with other public or private bodies.

Recommendations for local action plans. In addition to the recommendations for modifying the occupational standard for local experts on Roma issues, I think it would be necessary for the approach of the Roma community to have a central importance in the local action plan model as well. This aspect is justified, precisely because this working tool, is very important both in the process of collecting needs and in the process of designing concrete actions for social inclusion. Specifically, within the sections of the plan, it would be necessary for the existing units of measurement (number of persons, linear meters, kilometres, disability study, technical project, etc.) to be completed with another measurement unit such as the number of families, the number of people in the community targeted. For example, in the case of the proposal on a housing block, for which it is necessary to elaborate some technical documentation, but also its renovation or modernization, it can then be understood how many people, families from the Roma community and who are part of the locality, will effectively benefited from these social inclusion actions. Based on the integrated approach that governs the actions proposals and implicitly the projections of budgetary projections from the local level, another example that can be highlighted is the one related to the repair or modernization of the roads, the introduction of the water network and sewerage. Going forward, when it is proposed to modernize and equip a school where Roma students learn, the action proposal can be formulated in the sense that it can be observed that these actions aim at increasing the educational process for a number of children who do part of families which in turn are part of the Roma community, but especially are part of the local community. Thus, it will be possible to see more clearly the possible impact, but it will also quantify the number of people, families from the Roma communities who will benefit from these investments in educational infrastructure. Then, probably for the responsible local authorities, the understanding and acceptance of the fact that the needs of the people, respectively of the families from the Roma communities can be proposed on the priority lists of the locality, and then it will probably be easier to put them into practice.

In-depth on these recommendations regarding the improvement and adaptation of the local action plan for the Roma regarding the clarification of the approach for the Roma community, I consider that for the near future, it is justified to build by the central bodies an electronic application that will be able to follow the application, evolution and possibly completing this local plan. The scheme of these plans could be unitary. Then, perhaps, there could be better monitoring and increased efficiency of the process of Roma inclusion, starting from the local level to the county, central and even European, and then the plans to be transposed into real and concrete actions. . The use of electronic applications, has made remarkable progress in the last period, and I believe that even in the process of Roma inclusion, these opportunities should be maximized. Lately, many public and private entities, have decided to use such applications, in order to be able to collect unit, centralize and track data effectively, to reduce the time of implementation of the actions, but especially for the concrete and unitary monitoring of the actions proposed in the implementation process. By observing the right to the protection of personal data, such a project could also be implemented in the process of Roma inclusion. In this regard, in particular, the City Hall, through local experts on Roma issues, in the first phase would complete the sections in the needs sheet and plan through an application (software).

Recommendations for improving the working process at the local level. At the recommendations level, the external team providing this external support must have qualified human resources, both in the process of community facilitation and in the support component in accessing funding sources. During the period of granting the external support, it is necessary to have, simultaneously, public or European sources of financing, funds from the central level, or funds from the local budgets. In addition, these local communities need to be supported in attracting these sources of funding, especially where there is no specific expertise. The stages of external support must be clearly defined. External support must be granted and adapted according to the specificity of each locality. The methodologies and working documents used by the external team can be taken over by the local team to ensure sustainability.

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