
Annex 3. World Bank Involvement

Relative to other international organizations, the World Bank is a new player in the area of Roma issues. Much of the Bank's involvement to date has been, and continues to be, indirect through its on-going work in the region on poverty and development more broadly. However, the Bank has more recently become involved in a number of specific activities related directly to Roma. Current activities fall under the following areas:

Analytical Work

Bank analysis of issues related to Roma has had a number of objectives, including identifying issues, determining the appropriate role for the Bank, and providing a basis for policy dialogue with countries. As this report has highlighted, there are numerous gaps in the available information on Roma. The Bank has sought to identify and fill some of these gaps through commissioning studies and evaluations. Many of these are described in Annex 1.

Analytical activities also include assessment of programs and policies, to address the absence of monitoring and evaluation of interventions for the Roma. In Hungary, the Bank commissioned a comprehensive review of programs and projects for the Roma in the areas of education, employment, health and housing, in order to identify projects which can provide constructive lessons on the ingredients for success (and failure) of initiatives for the Roma.

Country Dialogue and Strategy Development

The Bank has begun to work at the country level to support policy development related to Roma. In *Hungary*, the Bank is working with the Office of National Minorities and other government and NGO partners on a strategy for implementation of the government's Medium Term Framework.

In *the Slovak Republic*, the Bank is supporting the establishment of the new Roma Office of the Council of Government for Minorities and Ethnic Groups in Bratislava through a grant from its Institutional

Development Fund (IDF) facility is launching both strategic dialogue and research activities. The project includes capacity building activities, including training of staff in the Office and in related government ministries, development of a database on Roma projects and partnership organizations, and public information initiatives. A similar IDF grant has recently been launched for the National Council for Ethnic and Demographic Issues in *Bulgaria*.

Operations

Bank operations address Roma indirectly in different ways, through its support in different policy areas. However, to date, the Bank has not had a targeted loan for the Roma.

Relatively new social development funds in *Bulgaria and Romania*, while not explicitly targeted at Roma, have begun to support Roma subprojects. In Bulgaria, the Regional Initiatives Fund required that 10 percent of subprojects should come from minority communities. The first wave of projects included support for a Roma employment project. In Romania, the Romanian Social Development Fund currently supports a family planning project for Roma. A Child Welfare project in Romania that supports the transition from institutions to community-based alternatives for care does not target Roma, but will probably include many Roma beneficiaries because of their over representation in child welfare institutions.

The Bank's post-conflict grant for *FYR Macedonia* supports Roma youth and families in the Suto Orizari neighborhood of Skopje, including activities to improve school attendance and improve the quality of education.

Partnerships

Bank involvement in Roma issues is closely coordinated with partner organizations, including European institutions, local Roma NGOs, and the Open Society Foundation. The Bank participates as an observer on the Council of Europe's Specialist Group on Roma-Gypsies.

In 2000, through its Development Grant Facility (DGF), the Bank has begun to support the work of the Autonomia Foundation, an NGO based in Hungary. The objective of the grant is to support income generation and employment activities for the Roma. To date, Autonomia's

activities have focused on Hungary, but with the support of the Bank and other donors, the programs will be expanded to other countries in the region that have significant Roma communities.