Reaching Vulnerable Groups: The Roma Minority in ECA

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Overview

- Background
- Roma poverty
- Projects & NGO initiatives
- Lessons and challenges
- World Bank involvement
Who are the Roma? Origins
Who are the Roma?

- Unique minority in ECA
- Estimated population of 7-11 million
- 70% in ECA; 80% in EU accession countries
- Not nomadic
- Very diverse set of groups and subgroups
Estimated populations in ECA

% Roma in total population

FYR Macedonia, Romania, Slovakia, Bulgaria, Hungary, FR Yugoslavia, Czech, Albania, Bosnia, Croatia, Turkey, Slovenia, Poland
Measurement Challenges

- Household surveys and census data have drawbacks;
- Administrative data are incomplete;
- Diversity of the Roma ‘community.’
Characteristics of Roma poverty

- Unfavorable starting position
- Low education levels
- High unemployment
- Poor housing conditions
- Poor health status
- Discrimination and exclusion
Roma are the main poverty risk group in Central and Southern Europe...

![Poverty Rate Chart](chart.png)
Addressing Roma poverty

- Existing social policies fail to reach Roma in important ways;
- Legacy of top-down approaches;
- Context of EU accession;
- Lots of project activity;
- Targeting can be divisive;
- Limited evaluation and understanding of what works.
### Roma projects in Hungary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Number of projects</th>
<th>% of total projects</th>
<th>Total Expenditures (HUF thousands)</th>
<th>% of total expenditures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>1,024,233</td>
<td>28.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment</td>
<td>1,121</td>
<td>80.2</td>
<td>2,174,272</td>
<td>59.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>32,795</td>
<td>0.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>2,700</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community centers</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>11,877</td>
<td>0.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>395,451</td>
<td>10.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>1,398</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>3,641,328</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Roma projects: Challenges (1)

- Limited capacity for implementation, fragmentation;
  - Same groups get projects; personalities dominate.

- Roma participation in all project phases is essential;
  - Roma mediators can play a positive role.
Roma projects: Challenges (2)

- However, local involvement does not guarantee objectives will be met...
  - Nyíregyháza housing project; education subsidies for Roma: local governments use projects to reinforce segregation.
  - Highlights the importance of incentives and monitoring.
Roma projects: Challenges (3)

- Weak links between projects and policy;
  - Fragmentation of efforts limits impact;
  - Can undermine objectives: risk that Bulgaria busing initiative may lead to lower school attendance.

- Evaluation of outcomes is critical;
  - Can improve outcomes, provide lessons at the national & regional levels, influence policy design.
World Bank Involvement

- Policy and Strategy Development
- Operations (e.g. IDF, SDF, DGF)
- Direct Support to NGOs (Small grants)
- Analytical work
Reaching Roma through community-based projects

- Social funds in Bulgaria and Romania
  - In Bulgaria 60% of projects were in minority communities; targeting based on unemployment levels;
  - Romania facilitators assist with preparation of project applications.

- DGF support for the Pakiv foundation
  - Small grants to communities in 4 countries;
  - First phase, training of facilitators.