

# ROMA INCLUSION ACTIVITY



## Goals

Reduce discrimination against Roma people

Improve Roma inclusion in society

## Duration

January 2021 – January 2026

## USAID Funding

\$2 million

## Implementing Partner

Institute for Research & Policy Analysis Romalitico

in collaboration with

Romaversitas  
Roma Entrepreneurship Development Initiative - REDI  
Romano Avazi

## Key National Partners

- Ministry of Labor & Social Policy
- Ministry of Justice
- Ministry of Health
- Ministry of Education & Science
- Interparliamentary Group for Support of Roma Rights
- Prime Minister's Advisor on Roma Inclusion and National Contact Point for Roma
- National Coordinator for the "One Society for All" Strategy

## USAID Contact

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## BACKGROUND

Roma are the most vulnerable and disadvantaged ethnic community in North Macedonia. Surveys reveal other groups view them as the least trusted community in the country due to the deeply rooted societal stereotypes. Roma experience numerous challenges in their daily lives due to prejudice, discrimination, which raise barriers to their social inclusion, empowerment, employment, participation in policy-making processes and structures at the national and local level. USAID contributes to this country's efforts to promote inclusivity, improve economic security and growth, engage youth in social and economic opportunities, and increase government transparency.

## PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The aim of the Roma Inclusion Activity is to empower Roma community members and civil society organizations (CSOs) to take leadership roles in the development and implementation of national strategies and policies pertaining to Roma inclusion, and to hold government institutions accountable for addressing Roma issues and needs. Through this partnership with the Institute of Research and Policy Analysis Romalitico, we are working to promote actions to address the human rights issues that Roma communities, themselves, have identified as priorities. We will support public education activities that empower Roma to use mechanisms for protection and addressing violations of their human rights. Through this activity we will empower the community to participate in local decision-making processes and include their priorities in the local agenda.

Through this partnership, we aim to diminish stereotypes and prejudices against Roma people by reducing their vulnerability to economic destitution and lessening their dependence on public assistance. We will support activities to increase the general public's awareness of Roma needs and the Roma community's potential to contribute to society.

We will further partner with Roma communities from 20 municipalities, CSOs, relevant government institutions, and other local counterparts. Guided by the local ownership principle, we will fully rely on local capacities to carry out project activities.

## ACHIEVEMENTS AND IMPACT

- The new National Roma Strategy 2022-2030 and its accompanying action plan were adopted, incorporating significant input provided through this Activity.
- Nineteen municipal Local Action Plans were developed, and already 11 have been adopted.
- Seventeen community hubs were opened in targeted municipalities to serve as community centers where Roma go for assistance, and to ensure Roma participation in policy decisions at the local level.
- Sixty Roma individuals were equipped with leaderships skills through participation in the Barvalipe Leadership Academy. Forty of them were then engaged to work in the community hubs as community mobilizers, business

facilitators, and legal monitors. They have helped 40 undocumented Roma to register for legal recognition and provided support for legalization of some illegal dwellings. They prepared the Roma community to apply for state-funded active labor market measures, and 132 Roma applied for Employment Service Agency grants for starting businesses, with 61 signing contracts for an average of 5,000 EUR each, and four signing contracts for 10,000 EUR each. Additionally, they provided almost 1,100 legal protection services to Roma individuals and assisted six Roma families to get housing through the social welfare system.

- They also helped 65 Roma to gain employment at private companies.
- An online human rights platform [www.reagiraj.org.mk](http://www.reagiraj.org.mk) was developed through which Roma can report human rights violations and legal monitors can work on their cases.
- Proposals to address Roma priorities were submitted to 15 municipal councils for inclusion in their 2022 budgets. These were based on ideas developed during the training on participatory budgeting that was provided to civil service organizations.
- A “Know Your Rights” campaign informed undocumented persons about the procedures for legal registration and obtaining personal identification documents.
- Almost 100 Roma, many of whom are already adults, have been able to attend courses to complete their primary education.
- Four public events raised awareness of Roma history and culture. These included an exhibit of photos and infographics about the Roma genocide, a dramatic presentation entitled *Nazi Leftovers* a museum exhibit of clothing and cultural artifacts, and the premier of the award - winning film *Gipsy Queen*.

