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National Policy Event: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR ROMA CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN SERBIA

28 May 2019, Belgrade, Serbia

Recommendations

General Recommendations and Key Messages

There is visible progress in the implementation of educational policies from the perspective of institutions

- Representatives / activists of Roma civil society organizations believe that adequate control mechanisms should be introduced in order to monitor the achievement of the goals of the National Strategy for Social Inclusion of Roma in the field of education.
- State should take the advantage of the existing current national project initiatives to increase the coverage of Roma children in early age with quality preschool education, with a special focus on increasing the coverage of children aged 3 to 5.5 years.
- Development of local support mechanisms that through inter-sectoral cooperation can contribute to achieving educational goals in the field of social inclusion of Roma.
- State should promote local partnerships with a more visible and significant role for Roma CSOs.
- Weakness of the governance process, which lacks adequate conditions for institutional cooperation, consequently resulting in weak capacity of the national and local institutions to foster inclusion of Roma children and youth commitment given from the State and international community.
- Lacking institutional support at the national and local level, especially with regards to provision of information to Roma youth, employment and public participation, development of knowledge and expertise, technical support and guidance in order to avoid frequent mistakes and learn from previous experience.
- State agencies in close partnership with Roma and non-Roma organizations should address specific needs of Roma girls and women to ensure adequate and equal access to education, employment, housing, health care and public life.

Session Specific Recommendations

Session I: Access to Quality Education for Roma and Children and Youth: Perspective from the ground

1. State and other relevant agencies should ensure continues support to Roma preschool education which in recent years was decreased gradually (the age of children from 5.5 to 7).
2. Relevant institutions should ensure environment for learning about the inter-cultural differences of children from other nationalities in preschool education and primary schools.
3. State and other relevant institutions should combat discrimination and negative attitude towards inclusive education by teaching and non-teaching staff in elementary and secondary schools.
4. Through the process of external evaluation of the quality of work of primary schools in 2018, a low percentage of achievability of indicators of evaluation of quality of work in the field of evaluation of teaching and learning of only 35% was identified for support to students from vulnerable groups.



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5. State in collaboration with Roma CSOs should recognize and stimulate Roma graduates to exercise their educational skills in public institutions;
6. State should ensure that Roma university graduates from the pedagogical or teachers' faculty are included in the educational institutions as teachers as long-term solution. Pedagogical Assistants status is still pending.
7. State should ensure and empower Romani language classes in primary schools with qualified teaching staff and material required to exercise the learning and teaching Romani language in primary schools.

Session II – Roma and Youth Employment: A Human Development Agenda for the Next Decade

1. Government to revise the education policy to reposition education and training to enable Roma and entrants to the labor market with the “right” skills, including soft skills which are increasingly being demanded by employers.
2. Improve the labor market forecasting significantly. Skills shortages are result of the mismatch between the education and training systems with the private corporate agencies and industry's needs (supply vs demand).
3. State should establish Roma employment committee which consists of government stakeholders, private corporate representatives and Roma and youth advocacy representatives. The task force must be high level, reporting to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.
4. Employment agencies are urged to take active measures in the exchange of employment programs and available opportunities to Roma CSOs. Outreach to Roma community should be frequent and jointly planed with local Roma CSOs.
5. State and corporate employment agencies should place particular efforts to strengthen dialogue with Roma and youth enabling free and participatory actions toward integrated employment opportunities.

Session III – Structural and Policy Changes for Roma and in Serbia: Scaling up Collaboration at the National Level

1. State agencies should be aware of the responsibilities deriving from the National Action Plan for Roma minority and proactively follow on-going developments at the central and local level.
2. Government should ensure adequate participatory support programs for the social inclusion of Roma following the principle “explicit but not exclusive targeting” and “aiming for the mainstream” with the purpose of pursuing the process of integration focused on the access and full enjoyment of the services, employment, education and participation.
3. State agencies and respective institutions should ensure that the dignity of all children is fully respected in schools, government should ensure that educational texts include material on Romani history and culture.
4. Dialogue between the State agencies and Roma community should be strengthened to reflect the situation in the ground and enact opportunities for the poverty reduction, equal participation, access to quality education and smooth transition to employment.
5. Government in close collaboration with the National Council of Roma National Minority should ensure equal participation of Roma in public and private corporate institutions as per their academic background and skills acquired during their studies.