



June 2016

PLOVDIV/ KUKLEN

INTEGRATED PROJECT CONCEPT FOR THE PROMOTION OF SOCIAL INCLUSION OF THE ROMA AND OTHER VULNERABLE GROUPS

OBJECTIVES OF THE PROJECT

The Swiss-Bulgarian Project for the Promotion of Social Inclusion of Roma and Other Vulnerable Groups is a comprehensive integrated project for inclusion of marginalized Roma in the largest Roma community in Europe – STOLIPINOVO, in the town of Plovdiv, and in a neighbouring town with compact Roma population - KUKLEN. Unofficial data of research centers claim that the actual number of Roma people living in Stolipinovo is more than 50,000. Kuklen has also a significant Roma community within its population of 6,020 people.

The project will support Roma inclusion in the two towns through implementing a variety of measures in the area of education, health (including infrastructure) and empowerment of the Roma community by means of arts, sports and cultural events. In the area of *education*, the project will aim to improve the access of the Roma children to kindergartens and primary schools, reduce drop-out rates, improve quality of teaching and motivate parents to enroll their children in the education system. In the area of *health*, the project will improve access to and quality of primary healthcare for Roma children, pregnant women and young families, increase health prevention and family planning measures and cover uninsured Roma women. The Roma community will be supported to express their identity by celebrating their traditions and holidays, through sports events and access to mainstream culture and arts.

The project is managed by Plovdiv, Iztochen and Kuklen municipalities with the purpose of ensuring continued ownership of local authorities beyond the project completion. The aim is to ensure programmatic, professional, financial and institutional sustainability. This project is one of the innovative examples of close collaboration between a donor and government/public institutions. The targeted beneficiaries are: children aged 3-10, young women, pregnant women, young families, Roma mediators, doctors, teachers and teaching aids.

ACTIVITIES UNDER THE PROJECT

STOLIPINOVO

“Kiril Nektariev” and “Nayden Gerov” are two primary schools in Stolipinovo, situated in one common yard and cater to the needs of 1400 Roma children grades 1st to 8th. Many of the children have poor Bulgarian language skills and usually lag behind with achievement and passing from one grade to the next. However, within the current setting, the schools do not provide additional Bulgarian language classes or any other additional catch-up classes, arts and sports or any work with parents. The project will replace a non-functional building in the school yard with a new one to create a Stolipinovo Educational Center to host an indoor sports hall, community spaces, extracurricular activities for the parents and students of both schools.



An active parents club will start functioning as well as a community library will open for joint readings and events. Teachers for extra-curricular work, sports, arts and work with parents will be hired under the programme. Applied arts classes will be setup whereby children will learn through games and art and improve their social skills. The overall expected result will be the improved school attendance, Bulgarian language skills, better motivation of parents and the creation of educational facilities stimulating community development and joint learning. The 1400 Roma kids and their teachers will benefit from the project.

“Lilia” Kindergarten hosts 6 groups of children aged 3-6 numbering 160 Roma kids in total. The kindergarten faces a major challenge because most of the →

Roma children lack Bulgarian language skills, which further hinders their enrolment in first grade. A special reading corner section will be set up in the kindergarten, alongside with an active parents club to improve Bulgarian language skills. The project aims at improving the learning environment through purchasing educational materials such as plot and role-playing games, books, and other tools to increase participatory learning and interaction. In addition, the kindergarten's yard is basically unprotected from acts of vandalism and burglaries. Because of this, the yard is not used for kindergarten activities.



The yard will first be protected through a special alarm system and then design and provide the equipment for two playgrounds. The expected results are that the overall level of Bulgarian language skills will be improved, especially that of the 6-year old children to allow for their smooth transfer to primary schooling. The surveillance system installed will allow for the construction of modern playgrounds which in turn will improve the educational activities through sports and games. All children (160) and teachers (12) will benefit from the project.

“Iztok” municipal medical centre is located in Stolipinovo and serves mainly the needs of the Roma community. However, many Roma people either do not want to visit the centre or do not have the insurance or the means to do so. The project will add more medical capacity to the centre by staffing it with an additional gynaecologist, a paediatrician and a general practitioner who will focus on diagnosis and prevention of chronic diseases, early pregnancies and primary healthcare for children and young families. Two health mediators will make the connection between the Roma community and the medical centre to secure better coverage of needs and will work in the area of health prevention, family planning and prevention of early pregnancies. Five additional medical offices will be open in a newly built adjacent to the centre building, which will replace the existing old one, and will host the doctors and the mediators. At least 20 health campaigns covering around 300 people aged 15-49 will take place, around 500 medical screenings will be performed, 100 pregnant women will be consulted, 150 children will be screened for immunizations.

KUKLEN

In Kuklen the educational activities will be carried out by the *“Indi-Roma 97” Educational Center*, which is affiliated with the primary school in the town and functions as an after school programme for the students from the school. A teacher in Bulgarian as a second language, an art teacher and an educational mediator will be hired under the project. At least 70 children and their parents will benefit from the after school programme. Kuklen has already a medical centre but additional two general practitioners and one health mediator will be hired to provide better access of the Roma people to healthcare.

KEY INFORMATION ON THE PROJECT

THEMATIC FOCUS

Integration, social inclusion and living conditions improvement of Roma and other vulnerable groups in Stolipinovo neighbourhood in Plovdiv and in the town of Kuklen.

BUDGET

CHF 633'821

BULGARIAN CO-FINANCING BY

- ❖ Ministry of Labour and Social Policy (MLSP)
- ❖ Ministry of Education and Science (MES)
- ❖ Ministry of Health (MH)

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

- ❖ Programme Management Unit hosted by the Bulgarian Ministry of Labour and Social Policy (MLSP)
- ❖ Ministry of Labour and Social Policy (MLSP)

EXECUTING AGENCY

Municipality of Plovdiv

PROJECT PARTNERS

- ❖ Iztochen district municipality (Plovdiv)
- ❖ Municipality of Kuklen
- ❖ “Iztok” Medical Centre, Plovdiv
- ❖ “Naiden Gerov” Primary School, Plovdiv
- ❖ “Kiril Nektariev” Primary School, Plovdiv
- ❖ “Lilia” Kindergarten, Plovdiv
- ❖ “Indi-Roma 97” Foundation
- ❖ “Plovdiv 2019” Foundation

DURATION

September 2016 – April 2019

