

ROMA ACTION 2013 - 2015

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Suzana Jašarević,
Country Director
for BiH

"Thanks to the project Roma Action, 150 Roma families in 14 municipalities in BiH will be accommodated in to the new or reconstructed housing units. The aim of the project is to support the implementation of Roma action plans in BiH with the contribution to improvement of living condition and socio-economic inclusion of Roma population with active involvement and participation of local authorities. The project is about housing, i.e. improvement of living conditions and complementary infrastructure as well as sustainability measures for a number of beneficiaries. It is very important that 150 Roma families in BiH will certainly improve their housing conditions and life in general."



Dr. Renzo Daviddi,
Deputy Head of the
Delegation of the
European Union to
Bosnia and Herzegovina

"This project is devoted to the general social progress and economic inclusion of Roma. The project is being implemented all over Europe, including the countries of the Western Balkans. This type of inclusion is very important for the EU and certainly the priority is to improve the living conditions of Roma. This is a really important area for the EU. The plan is also to organize another conference early next year, where we will basically analyze the progress made in the last year and a half in BiH".

About the project

The project ROMA ACTION (RA) - Support of socio-economic inclusion of Roma population in BiH through provision of housing and socio-economic measures with proactive participation of local authorities and other local stakeholders is financed by the European Union and BiH authorities through the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA 2011) and local co-funding in the total amount of €3.036.856 where 2,5 million EUR is allocated through IPA funding.

The project duration is 22 months and it includes interventions in 14 municipalities around BiH that are: Tuzla, Lukavac, Gracanica, Novo Sarajevo, Centar Sarajevo, Zenica, Kakanj, Bihac, Krupa, Gornji Vakuf-Uskoplje, Čapljina, Vukosavlje, Zvornik and Bijeljina. Beside almost all project municipalities, Federation BiH, Ministry of refugees and DPs and three cantonal ministries: Tuzla Canton, Zenica - Dobo Canton and Una-Sana Canton participate in the project co-funding.

Hilfswerk Austria International (HWA) implements the project in partnership with Arbeiter - Samariter - Bund Deutschland e.V (ASB) and the Roma Association Kali Sara - Crna Sara and in association with fourteen municipalities and five ministries.

According to HWA survey, there are **1.391 Roma families (or 5.968 persons) in BiH in need for social housing**. The issue of housing is accompanied and additionally troubled with increasing needs for

Roma Action Project



employment, education and health protection of Roma in BiH.

As such, this project is meant to support improvement of social status of Roma minority, thus being complementary part of the BiH Strategy for Addressing Roma Issues from 2005.

Roma Action will provide the most important missing elements to improve the excluded Roma families with living conditions and finally bring them to social inclusion.

HWA will assist the total of 150 vulnerable Roma families through housing & infrastructure, livelihood-job creation and social measures. >>>

In this issue

About the project	1
The initial conference	3
Current in implementation	4
Next steps	4



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1

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Project activities and consequent project results are designed to directly produce positive socio-economic changes within Roma population in the housing sector (provision of homes and related infrastructure), economic sector (provision of livelihood/job creation measures) and social sector (promotion and rising awareness on necessity for civil registration, legal education, access to health care and employment, construction and/or job creation process).

In addition, through direct participation of beneficiaries and local authorities in project implementation, an additional sense of ownership over the project outputs will be vested at both targeted Roma families and target municipalities. Finally, Roma Action will have regional, multi-area approach, as the support to Roma families shall be provided in 14 BiH municipalities in both entities, thus respecting specific political and socio-economic character of the country.

It is estimated that around 900 Roma minority citizens of all ages will directly benefit from the project plus at least 300 local population from larger infra-structure interventions. By introducing joint housing, economic, social and capacity building measures HWA applies an integrated approach to address the social exclusion issue of Roma population in BiH, thus adding value to the overall project impact.



Expected Project Results:

- 150 Roma families in 14 selected municipalities accommodated after the reconstruction of 64 individual dwellings and construction of 86 apartments under social housing concept (app. 11-12 apartment buildings);
- At least 100 Roma families benefited from the related infrastructure interventions;
- At least 80 Roma families increased potential for economic inclusion through provision of livelihood/job creation measures;
- 150 Roma families capacitated for better social inclusion through the promotion of civil registration, access to housing and employment;
- 14 Roma associations active in the targeted municipalities increased capacities of their human resources concerning promotional Roma actions;
- Municipal authorities and relevant ministries additionally capacitated in work with Roma issues.

Finally, more than **1.300 individuals** will directly benefit from the project implementation.

All of the relevant municipal authorities have agreed to provide land and technical infrastructure for construction of dwellings and to provide financial contribution within municipal budgetary limits, thus confirming their determination to treat Roma citizens equally as others and municipal authorities also actively participate in the project implementation as project associates.

Roma Associations/representatives in targeted areas have fully supported project idea and gave undivided support during the project preparatory phase by providing all required information.

Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees (MHRR) that has programmed the action within IPA 2011 funding to support the implementation of Action Plans for inclusion of Roma population in BiH within the Roma Decade 2005-2015, will monitor the project and validate final lists of selected beneficiaries. UNHCR and OSCE have fully supported the project idea and will provide site monitoring and support where necessary.



The initial conference



The initial conference that officially launched the EU supported largest project for inclusion and improvement of living conditions of Roma population in Bosnia and Herzegovina took place on October 2, 2013 under the auspices of Hilfswerk Austria International with the presence of Head of EU delegation to B&H, Dr. Renzo Daviddi, BiH Ministry for Human Rights and Refugees Minister Damir Ljubić, UNHCR Representative in BiH Andrew Mayne, OSCE BiH Deputy Head of Mission Nina Suomalainen, project municipalities mayors, Roma representatives, project partners, and other relevant stakeholders from international and local organizations.

The aim of the conference was to raise awareness on the need for social inclusion, housing and socio-economic assistance for vulnerable

Roma citizens in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The European Union's support for the Decade of Roma was presented at the conference as well as the social housing model that was developed by Hilfswerk Austria International, which is being used in the Roma Action project. The conference also served as an exce-

llent tool for establishing links, communications and cooperation channels among all stakeholders, primarily those who would be directly participating in the project and assisting in its implementation. The conference was very well covered and promoted by numerous BiH media.



Currently in implementation

All project preparatory activities have been done. Partnership Agreements (PA) between HWA and project partners and the most of project municipalities and associated ministries are signed. Project Implementation Teams (PITs) and Beneficiary Selection Committees (BSCs) are formed in each project municipality. Project Steering Committee consisting of HWA Programme Manager/Head of Mission, ASB Country Director, Kali Sara project manager, representative of the MHRR and one representative entity/cantonal ministries (rotating between Federal and Cantonal Ministries for DPs and refugees), is supervising and coordinating the implementation of all project components and phases in close

coordination and collaboration with all relevant project stakeholders and donors. Beneficiary selection process is now complete. By-law prescribed criteria were used at the municipal level involving municipal, civil and project structures in the selection process and “case by case” approach.

Roma families are well informed, prepared and directly involved in the project implementation together with municipal authorities and relevant civil structure. This, along with a close cooperation and coordination between the main project stakeholders guarantees the success of the project.



Next steps

The completion of beneficiary selection shall be followed by the signing of tripartite agreements between HWA, beneficiaries and municipalities. The commencement of construction works follows.

Due to the complexity of the project and sensitivity of the beneficiary group, HWA and partners will manage and organize the whole reconstruction/construction process cycle – preparation of tender procedure, works, contracting, monitoring and supervision in close coordination with Project Implementation Teams involving relevant municipal departments of Spatial Planning & Housing, Communal Works and Finance, depending on the nature of each reconstruction cycle phase. Besides the housing aspect and in the course of further implementation, Roma Action entails grant-based economic packages for at least 80 Roma families, 14 info sessions, 14 workshops and 14 promotional campaigns for awareness raising for 152 target Roma families in the area of social inclusion.



Finally, HWA shall provide on the job coaching for at least 28 employees of 14 Roma associations in the target municipalities and through active participation in the project 42 municipal and 16 relevant ministries employees shall obtain increased skills and knowledge concerning Roma-related issues. The completion of Roma Action shall be marked by a final conference scheduled to take place in March 2015. HWA expects successful and timely implementation.



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