

Title of the project/program: Integrom

Implementer: Autonomia Foundation, Boston Consulting Group

Status: ongoing

Country: Hungary

Location: Budapest, Székesfehérvár, Nyíregyháza, Békéscsaba, large towns of Hungary, the location of the firms partnering in the program as employers.

Partners:

- Roma NGOs, facilitating the recruitment and screening of the participants (Add a kezzed Association, Aparhanti independent Roma association, Uccu Foundation)
- NGOs supporting Roma university graduates (Romaveristas, Romaster, Roma Education Fund)
- Training, recruitment companies providing services for the training free of charge (Hays, Dramatix, Assessment System)
- Large companies providing employment: energy providers, banks, electronics production company

Funders: Open Society Foundation, Hungarian Telekom, Boston Consulting Group

Targeting: young educated Roma, aged 18-35, with secondary or higher education. Unemployed, or present employment is lower quality than their qualification.

Minimum criteria for selection: being Roma with at least secondary education.

Process of selection: recruitment through various Roma or pro-Roma organizations, online application, screening interview

Target numbers for pilot year (2014): 60 trained participants, 15-20 employed through the program at partner firms

Program overview:

The project aims at developing a new model to facilitate Roma employment in the private sector. The present phase is a small-scale pilot program, experimenting with various tools that assist the potential employees to access mainstream jobs as well as the employer companies to create inclusive environment.

The results of the experiment – if successful – can form the basis of well-established, fact-based policy tools for the government for creating more efficient employment and integration policies. The final objective of the project is to create a tried-and-tested model that can be mainstreamed by the present partners or by state actors.

The program is initiated by the Boston Consulting Group, in cooperation with Autonomia Foundation and several large companies in Hungary. The program is piloting a new approach for Roma

integration through promoting employment in the mainstream business sector. The main idea of the program is to facilitate access of Roma to non-physical jobs at market-leading companies that represent higher level employment opportunities. The pilot project is largely implemented through coordinated CSR activities of various actors – large firms as employers, training and assessment companies, consultancy companies and NGOs.

The project identifies and recruits companies that show openness to this initiative - mostly from the client sphere of the Boston Consulting Group.

The project assists the recruitment and employment process by

- identifying relevant positions at the participating companies
- adjusting various company procedures to make the open positions accessible for Roma (sensitive recruitment, affirmative action, etc)
- recruiting and screening potential Roma employees
- prepare the candidates for the recruitment process
- assist the employers creating an inclusive environment, help the new Roma employees integrating into the company environment, minimizing drop-out
- facilitate networking among the partner organizations
- draws conclusions, adjusts the methodology and distill a model at the end of the project.

- ***Recruitment of Roma candidates:***

The recruitment at the countryside localities is based on the client network of local Roma organizations and other organizations supporting Roma youth.

These organizations together with Autonomia Foundation do the initial prescreening of the applicants, according to the expectation of the given job openings. Recruitment and prescreening is based on an online application form and personal interviews

- ***Preparation of the candidates:***

The preparation involves a 4-day training with various training elements – computer skills, presentation and communication skills, simulation of interview situation, advice on CV and motivational letter, individual coaching, feedback on personality test, etc.

- ***Assisting the companies with***

- compilation of a practical handbook for the participating companies
- collection of similar initiatives at partner companies within the same multinational holding
- reviewing relevant company procedures and adjusting them to facilitate the recruitment of Roma (sensitive recruitment, affirmative action, mentoring, etc)
- collecting the job openings, coordinating the recruitment process

- ***Networking and conclusions***

- two workshops are organized during the pilot year with all the partner organizations at the beginning and at the end of the project to evaluate and adapt the procedures
- methodological review, model description at the end of the project.

Program Monitoring and Evaluation:

- 2 workshops to evaluate the effectiveness of the project and adapt procedures where necessary
- continuous monitoring of the status of the participants (in recruitment, successfully employed, drop-out, etc)
- continuous review of the available job openings and matching them with the profile of the candidates
- feedback from all participants of the trainings (participants, trainers, interview simulators) at the end of each training round and refinement of the training methods

Milestones and targets are:

- four recruitment-training-employment cycles in the pilot year

- 10-15 participants/training, 50-60 altogether this year
- 4-5 participants successfully employed/quarter year

Outcomes:

The pilot phase involves:

- five market-leading companies enrolled as employers
- 20 Roma assisted in finding employment at these companies
- methodology and model tried and distilled for Roma integration through promoting employment in the mainstream business sector.
- cooperation between 10-15 various organizations (employer companies, training, recruitment and consultancy firms, NGOs and Roma colleges) established
- new CSR strategies developed or strengthened that have tangible impact on Roma integration

Sustainability:

- employed participants will have stable, long-term, quality employment
- the model developed will be tested, adapted and ready for enlargement after the pilot year
- actual plan for sustaining/broadening of the project in the framework of a three-year Progress project submitted in December 2013 (waiting for the result of the application).

Cost-Efficiency:

At present the project is run on a very low budget, covering “hard” expenses, like food, lodging and travel expenses of the trainings. At the present pilot phase all the partners – BCG, Autonomia Foundation, the training, assessment and recruitment companies, the local organizations involved in the recruitment process – work in this project without remuneration.

The value of the contribution of the training companies is approximately 8,8 million HUF/four training events this year. The value of the work of the implementing organization and the partner Roma organizations is not calculated yet

Detailed cost efficiency calculations are not done in the project, however it could be calculated on the basis of

- increased income of the participants by gaining better employment
- public costs saved on unemployment/social benefits, etc on participants who would be unemployed, enrolled into employment training, etc if not employed through the project

Lessons Learned:

During the first 5 months of project implementation the main conclusion is that the model seems to be working. There are elements of the project that should be developed further, when more resources are available. These are the followings, based on the experiences so far:

Longer, more diverse preparation process, before enrolling the participants into employment

Coaching, mentoring the participants at the preparation, and later, at the early phase of employment

Carrier orientation for the participants not gaining employment in the program

Broadening the scope of the employer firms in number, geographical location, type of position offered

Resources:

Project webpage: www.integrom.hu

Program description on Autonomia webpage: <http://autonomia.hu/hu/programok/integrom-program>

Contact person:

Agnes Kelemen: agnes.kelemen@autonomia.hu, 36 70 4911032

Definitions

ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

There is no single accepted definition of economic empowerment or a single indicator for levels of economic empowerment. The definition provided here draws on the definition of empowerment and the understanding of financial inclusion. It is meant to serve as initial guidelines and basis for further discussion on the meaning and understanding of economic empowerment of Roma.

Empowerment is the process of increasing the capacity of individuals or groups to make choices and to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes. Central to this process are actions which both build individual and collective assets, and improve the efficiency and fairness of the organizational and institutional context which govern the use of these assets.¹

Using this definition to define **economic empowerment of Roma** leads towards the following: the economic empowerment of Roma is a process of increasing capacities; the target of such process is Roma as individuals and groups; the method is building (creating and/or developing) capacities, assets and institutions and improving efficiency and fairness of use of assets and functioning of governing institutions; the aim is to enable informed choices related to the economy (economic activities and relations), transforming those choices into actions leading to the desired outcomes.

Financial inclusion occurs when (Roma) individual and groups have effective access to a range of financial products and services that cater to their multiple business and household needs and that are responsive to the socioeconomic and cultural factors that cause financial exclusion in individuals and groups that have different characteristics. Financial inclusion, managed properly, can increase the empowerment of individuals and groups in a number of ways. Firstly, having access to resources on their own account and to the tools that help them to earn a living can increase individuals and groups bargaining power within their immediate living environment² and their influence over how money and other resources are used. Secondly, financial inclusion can help increase individuals and groups opportunities to earn an income or control assets outside the immediate living environment. Thirdly, it can reduce individuals and groups vulnerability by, for example, allowing them to insure against risk or borrow to meet unexpected expenses, such as medical treatments. These are all key factors for economic empowerment and they can also help to empower individuals and groups more broadly.³

COMMUNITY-LED ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

Community-led economic empowerment processes are sets of actions undertaken on community level with full participation of the community in all the stages of the process that aims at economic empowerment of the community. The stages of the process include defining problems and objectives, needs assessment, project design, implementation, decision-making, monitoring and evaluation. Community-led processes focus on specific sub-regional areas, are governed (owned) by local action groups composed of representatives of local private and public socio-economic interests, are carried out through integrated and multi-sectoral area-based local development strategies designed taking into consideration local needs and potential.

These processes encourage local communities to develop integrated bottom-up approaches in circumstances where there is a need to respond to territorial and local challenges calling for structural change; build community capacity and stimulate innovation (including social innovation), entrepreneurship and capacity for change by encouraging the development and discovery of untapped potential from within communities and territories; promote community ownership by increasing

¹ World Bank definition available at: <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTPOVERTY/EXTEMPowerment/0,,contentMDK:20272299~pagePK:210058~piPK:210062~theSitePK:486411,00.html>

² Immediate living environment refers to: household, community, municipality, country.

³ Adjusted from DFID's toolkit on financial inclusion of women available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/213907/promoting-womens-financial-inclusion-toolkit.pdf

participation within communities and build the sense of involvement and ownership that can increase the effectiveness of public policies; and assist multi-level governance by providing a route for local communities to fully take part in shaping the implementation of public policies in all areas.⁴

Examples: [economic development project in Kosovo](#), [business incubator in Bulgaria](#).

SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

Social enterprises⁵ are business created to further a social purpose in a financially sustainable way.

- Social enterprises provide income generation opportunities that meet the basic needs of people who live in poverty.
- Social enterprises are sustainable. Earned income from sales is reinvested in their mission. They do not depend on philanthropy and can sustain themselves over the long-term.
- Social enterprises are scalable. Their models can be expanded or replicated to other communities to generate more impact.

Social enterprises can be both non-profit and for-profit in form. Some social enterprises are created, operated and/or owned by non-profit, charitable organizations as a means of generating income and/or to otherwise further their social mission. Other social enterprises are incorporated as a for-profit entity but the business strategy is designed to achieve a social objective.

Example: [cucumber growing project in Hungary](#).

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY (CSR)

Corporate social responsibility⁶ is the commitment of business to contribute to sustainable economic development, working with employees, their families, the local community and society at large to improve quality of life, in ways that are both good for business and good for development.

Example: [US Steel in Slovakia](#).

⁴ Adjusted from European Commission's guidelines on community-led local development available at: http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/informat/2014/community_en.pdf

⁵ Definition adopted from the NESsT (organization that develops sustainable social enterprises that solve critical social problems in emerging market economies) website: <http://www.nesst.org/social-enterprise/>

⁶ World Bank definition available in (pg. 1): http://info.worldbank.org/etools/docs/library/57434/publicpolicy_econference.pdf; similar definition is provided by the World Business Council for Sustainable Development: <http://www.wbcsd.org/work-program/business-role/previous-work/corporate-social-responsibility.aspx>