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EVALUATION OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE AND EUROPEAN UNION JOINT PROGRAMME 'ROMED'

COUNTRY FINDINGS UKRAINE

ROMED in Ukraine

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1.1 Introduction

There is no recent official data on the Roma population in Ukraine. The last official census of 2001 lists around 42,000 Roma in Ukraine. Unofficial estimates vary between 120,000 and 400,000. They mostly live in Zakarpattia, Donetsk, Dnipropetrovsk, Odessa, Kharkiv and Luhansk oblasts. The key problems facing Roma communities include low levels of education, high unemployment rates, poor access to healthcare and social services, lack of registration documents, poor housing conditions and discriminatory attitudes both from authorities and the wider population. There are around 90 Roma NGOs in Ukraine addressing these key problems at various levels.

Recent political developments in Ukraine have further negatively affected the situation of Roma, in particularly those displaced from Crimea and eastern Ukraine. OSCE/ODIHR reports that Roma are victims of violence and notes an increasing number of displaced Roma.¹

Roma mediators are a relatively new phenomenon in Ukraine. The National Focal Point (NFP) “Chiricli Roma Women’s Foundation” started promoting the idea in 2010. Officially, the profession of mediator is not recognised by the state. The first breakthrough in institutionalising the state-funded education of mediators was only achieved in May 2016. The Institute of Social Work and Management (Kyiv) of the [National Pedagogical Dragomanov University](#) approved the inclusion of the course “Mediation as a form of social work with the Roma minority” in the official Bachelor Degree curriculum starting in the 2016–2017 academic year. The course was developed by ROMED1 trainers and a local team based on the ROMED1 Trainer’s Handbook. Further legislative changes are needed in order to institutionalise the mediator in the official chart of professions.

A new Strategy for the Protection and Integration of Roma until 2020 was adopted in Ukraine on 8 April 2013. However, the Strategy does not mention mediation as a tool to achieving Roma inclusion related to legal, social education, health, housing and cultural rights. The ROMED NFP was very active in creating an Inter-Agency Working Group for Roma at the level of the Cabinet of Ministers, which will oversee the implementation of the Strategy. The group was established on 25 November 2015.² At the local level, the Strategy provided impetus and a legal framework for municipalities to develop Roma inclusion action plans and allocate funding for solving Roma issues.

1.2 ROMED1 key findings

1.2.1 Relevance

ROMED1 was an innovative Programme with a special curriculum developed to fit best European practice of mediation. It was adapted to the Ukrainian legislative framework and cultural specificities. Mediators serve as an important link between the Roma community and the state (local and national levels). The main benefits of employing mediators are their knowledge of Roma community culture and trust among Roma communities. Mediators can gain access to communities and this helps to

¹ <https://www.osce.org/odihr/124494?download=true>

² <http://www.kmu.gov.ua/control/uk/cardnpd?docid=248677547>

better serve their needs. They are also committed and passionate about helping Roma. Challenges arise from the insecurity of employment of mediators, lack of financial resources to cover costs related to solving Roma problems (medical diagnosis, treatment, administrative fees for courts and document processing) and a corrupt, inefficient bureaucracy.

1.2.2 Efficiency and Effectiveness of the ROMED1 Training Process

The key stage of the ROMED1 training took place in 2011-2013 when 54 mediators (37 women and 17 men) were trained. The NFP and social work professionals selected the mediators. The NFP was active in spreading the information via its network of Roma NGOs and Roma activists so as to recruit participants for the training. Of the 60 mediators who applied, 54 were selected and trained. They represented a wide geographic scope of localities, including Zakarpattia, Kirovograd, Zhytomyr, Kharkiv and Lviv oblasts.

The ROMED1 curriculum was evaluated as useful both by the mediators and local government officials, including social workers. The diversity of topics ranged from effective mediation and the Code of Ethics for Mediators, to confidence building in the community and peer support. At present there are three trainers in Ukraine who can deliver the ROMED1 curriculum.

In response to the emergency in Ukraine following the military conflict in the East, the World Health Organization (WHO) launched a new programme to support health mediators. Over 40 people were trained with a particular focus on assisting with the prevention of polio, tuberculosis, general immunisation and tackling women's health problems. The backbone for this programme was the network of mediators developed by ROMED1.

ROMED1 trainers are often invited to conduct training in project management and strategic planning for young Roma activists, women, teachers, and social workers. Other NGOs, the International Renaissance Foundation, the Roma Education Fund, the Ministry of Social policy and local governments often commission such training.

Key challenges in the way of the effective development of mediators include:

- Lack of state programmes that support mediation. Capacity-building and employment of mediators is dependent on the non-state sector's ability to attract western funding to cover mediators' salaries;
- Widespread misunderstanding of why Roma should get special assistance from mediators and why this service should be provided by the state;
- Personalised approach: most of the progress in institutional development of mediation took place thanks to committed individuals, such as the NFP, trainers, and local government officials cooperating with the Programme;
- Political instability in Ukraine makes it difficult to build institutional partnerships, as government officials, especially at national level, often change;
- Increasing poverty: the World Bank estimates that the poverty rate has increased from 3.3 per cent in 2014 to 5.8 per cent in 2015, while moderate poverty increased from 15.2 to 22.2 per cent respectively.³

³ <http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2016/04/01/ukraine-economic-update-spring-2016>

1.2.3 Outcomes and impacts

Contribution to the professional development of mediators and their recognition

A focus group with mediators in Kyiv confirmed that training programmes were beneficial. The participants mentioned that the training contributed to their professional development and provided: 1) the necessary skills in tackling Roma issues; 2) an improved standing of Roma issues with the local authorities; 3) a network of mediators that could provide peer support; and 4) improved communication skills vis-à-vis local authorities and Roma communities.

From the perspective of national authorities, mediators help reduce the gap between the state and the Roma community. Roma issues are diverse across Ukraine and mediators - often linked with Roma NGOs - can help communicate needs and problems, which is important for policy-making. At the national level, mediators are also helping to bring best European practices of gender inclusion into the Roma strategy. A seminar on this topic took place on 24 November 2015 and benefitted from the participation of the Deputy Minister of Social Policy and representatives from an additional ten Council of Europe member States.⁴

Local authorities perceive mediators as individuals who, first of all, are backed by the trust of Roma communities. In the framework of the case study of the Darnytsia administration of Kyiv, the local official who participated in the training stated that it helped her better understand the importance of mediators. They are indispensable in navigating both the hierarchy and the close-knit family relations in the Roma community.

Mediators are important entry points into Roma communities. International organisations and Ukrainian NGOs engage mediators in research on the status of Roma. For example, in 2015 the WHO and the Ukrainian Peacekeeping School engaged many mediators in the study of Roma communities in Ukraine.

However, the ROMED1 training only marginally improved the employment status of mediators. Mediation is a sector that depends on western donors. The Ukrainian state has no resources to support this service. After the training, most mediators are contracted by the National ROMED Support Organisation Chiricli to provide mediation services as self-employed consultants. From 2011-2014, all 54 mediators trained by ROMED1 were employed by Chiricli with the support of different donors. As of March 2016, of the 42 mediators who are still contracted by Chiricli, 17 also have their own Roma NGOs, with the rest working on an individual basis. Only six out of these 42 mediators have an additional source of income and are employed.

To encourage state social services to cooperate with mediators, the NFP, via its NGO, signed a cooperation agreement with the state's Centres of Social Services for Children, Families and Youth to engage mediators to provide social services to Roma communities. Eight such agreements were signed in the following locations: Zaporizhzhia municipal centre, Uzhgorod, Beregovo, Kirivograd, Kharkiv, Komintern region, Kyiv city centre and Pereyaslav-Khmelnyski centre.

Contribution to increased access to services in communities

Mediators have substantially improved access to services in the areas where they work. The mediators are now working in seven out of 24 oblasts of Ukraine and the city of Kyiv. These are: Zakarpattia oblast (Uzhgorod, Mukachevo, Perechyn, village of Berezny), Zaporizhzhia oblast (city of Zaporizhzhia), Donetsk oblast (city of Dniprodzerzhynsk), city of Kyiv, Kyiv oblast (city of Pereyaslav-

⁴ <http://chirikli.com.ua/index.php/ua/novini/item/74-ukraina-maie-shans-radykalno-zminyty-na-krashche-i-zhyttia-romiv>

Khmelnysky), Kirovograd oblast (cities of Kirovograd and Oleksandria), Odessa oblast (city of Odessa) and Kharkiv Oblast (city of Kharkiv and Merefa).

During the six months from October 2015 to March 2016, the NFP reports that the network of 40 mediators covered 34,683 Roma representatives, which includes 7,144 families, of which 11,125 are women, 7,890 men and 15,668 children. Each month, mediators provide services to around 200 to 300 Roma IDPs.

The most popular services include:

- Assistance with applications for identification documents;
- Residence registration;
- Court appeals;
- Access to local state financial subsistence and services (utility subsidies, pensions, disability payment);
- Information about social protection and basic rights;
- Assistance with social housing and employment;
- Educational support to improve school attendance;
- Medical assistance with access to diagnosis and access to hospitals.

Some positive structural results could be observed in Odessa with regards to the proposed pilot project of the Oblast Migration Service to introduce a simplified procedure for obtaining identification documents for Roma. Thanks to the active cooperation between the NFP, the Ministry of Social Policy and its Centres for Homeless, which provide registration for Roma in order to obtain passports, it became easier for Roma to apply for passports.

In terms of improving access to education, Uzhgorod is the key target of ROMED2 activities due to a high concentration of Roma. After the active work of Roma mediators identified 37 Roma children that did not attend school, in two months the mediators managed to bring 15 children back to school. Success could be attributed to the active cooperation between the Municipal Department of Education and the commitment of teachers to work with mediators.

ROMED2 established a strong partnership with the Deputy Governor of Zakarpattia oblast. As a follow-up to the working group's meeting (5 April 2016) in which mediators participated, the authorities decided to build a new pre-school in the village of Poroshkovo, which has a large Roma community.

Nationwide, mediators try to improve the access of Roma to medical services. To date, mediators have established cooperation with each of the Oblast Public Health Departments, notably when Roma face discrimination from local healthcare providers (ignoring emergency calls, refusal of admission in hospitals): mediators lodge complaints on malpractice and usually health departments react and help solve these problems.

Impact at the national level

The National Support Team leads active advocacy work at national level for Roma inclusion and proactively pursues different avenues of cooperation in order to institutionalise the profession of the mediator. The NFP was very active in providing ideas for both the national Roma strategy and the subsequent National Action Plan on the Implementation of the Strategy. Active advocacy work of the NFP led to the creation of the Inter-Agency Group for the implementation of the Roma strategy in 2015.

There are also active working contacts with the Ministry of Culture which is in charge of the implementation of both the Roma strategy and the Strasbourg Declaration. Cooperation with the

Ministry of Social Policy led to the ***development and adoption of a new state standard for mediation, officially called "standard for services of representation"***. The standard was piloted with Roma mediators and will be approved in 2016. One more standard on social mediation is pending approval by the Ministry. To further promote the ROMED1 Trainer's Handbook, the State Institute of Family and Youth Policy offers training in Roma mediation for its social workers, who undergo regular professional development programmes.

The most positive development in terms of national impact is the agreement of the State Dragomanov University (Institute of Social Work) and the Association of Social Workers to launch a new course on "Mediation as a form of social work with the Roma minority", starting from September 2016 for Roma mediators. The course was developed by the NFP and Ms Larysa Kobelyanska, based on the ROMED1 Trainer's Handbook. It will include 72 hours of lectures and practical work that will result in a state-recognised social work diploma. It will be based on a flexible methodology: distance-learning, evening courses and individual teaching to adapt to different levels of skills of existing mediators. After graduation, mediators could be employed by the state social agencies.

Finally, the NFP pursues active cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the implementation of the Council of Europe Action Plan for Ukraine.

1.2.4 Sustainability

Mediation remains a sector dependent on western donors. It is unlikely to continue at this stage without external support. With the exception of a small pool of social workers who could be trained by the Institute of Family and Youth and the future programme at the Institute of Social Work, there are no other state institutions that could deliver the training for mediators. Some limited resources could be obtained from the International Renaissance Foundation's Roma programme.

However, there are several strong stimuli that enable further development of Roma mediation in Ukraine. There is a strong commitment of the ROMED NFP Chiricli to integrate the ROMED1 Trainer's Handbook into existing training for social workers. ROMED1 built an informal network of committed partners, including state training centres, that see its value. Training programmes receive good feedback from participants. There is a cohort of motivated local officials partnering with the Programme, who could try to use decentralisation reform to provide resources at the local level for such training. In cooperation with the active network of Roma NGOs, a coalition of experts could make the idea of mediation advance in Ukraine. Finally, Ukraine's EU integration obligations provide impetus for further Roma inclusion.

1.3 ROMED2 key findings

1.3.1 Relevance

All stakeholders assessed ROMED2 positively. Its value comes from the need to engage local authorities in Roma inclusion, as they are the key to creating sustainable structural changes for improving the status of Roma in their respective communities. ROMED2 opens a pathway for constructive inclusive cooperation between mediators, community and local authorities to improve access to services and address key problems.

For mediators, it was important to learn how to engage with local governments in order to improve access to services as they face on a daily basis inefficient bureaucracy and a corrupt political culture in

Ukraine. Building the “coalition of the willing” among local officials, mediators and the Roma community was exactly what ROMED2 delivered.

Another key added value of ROMED2 is the mobilisation of citizens into Community Action Groups (CAGs). The cooperation between the mediators, CAG and NFP/NPO was very effective. The ROMED2 approach puts Roma communities at the centre of it. It gives Roma a voice, starting with dialogue from inside the community about what their needs are. It helps deliver services, as well as institutionalise cooperation with the state. For example, Roma mediators were included in the Municipal Civil Society Councils in Kirovograd, Uzhgorod, Beregovo, Kyiv and Odessa.

There are no other programmes in Ukraine that operate on the lines of a formally-structured, cooperative triangle of community, mediators/facilitators and local government. Each participating municipality has formally assigned a partner for cooperation with the Programme. In most cases, the NFP/NPO, communities and mediators reported solid and productive cooperation.

1.3.2 Efficiency and effectiveness of assisted local processes

Selection of municipalities

ROMED2 is working with five different localities in Ukraine which are rather diverse. They were selected following two key criteria: 1) the presence of ROMED1 mediators and quality of cooperation with NFP and mediators; and 2) the commitment and willingness of local authorities to address Roma issues.

Zakarpattia oblast has the largest concentration of Roma in Ukraine. Roma comprise 3% of the total population, around 50,000. It is a largely rural area. It has three large settlements, with over 7,000 people in the settlement of Mukachevo alone. Roma often migrate to Kyiv for work or travel to Hungary in search of jobs. Odessa oblast has the second largest Roma population. Some 20,000 Roma live there in around seven settlements. Kirovograd oblast has a smaller Roma community dispersed around towns and villages. Often originating from the Republic of Moldova, they do not possess any documentation (passports and birth certificates).

Two other localities of ROMED2 have smaller Roma populations: Pereyaslav-Khmelytsky and the Darnytsia region of the city of Kyiv. Both have around 600 Roma inhabitants. In Pereyaslav, Roma are mostly scattered around the neighbouring villages. In Darnytsia, many Roma families live dispersed in permanent housing. There is also a Roma settlement (in the area of Teplovizorna) with between 100 and 200 people residing there, including children.

Development of the CAGs

CAGs were created with the assistance of mediators and NFP. The average size of the CAG is seven people with usually more than half being women. In some cases, like in the smaller city of Pereyaslav-Khmelnyski, five out of the eight CAG members are women. In locations where Roma activism has been developing for a longer period of time and where the concentration of the Roma population is higher, CAG representatives are more active. In Kyiv, due to the high seasonal migration of Roma from the Zakarpattia region, it was harder to organise the work with the Roma living in the settlement.

The key challenge is maintaining the active engagement of the members of the CAG. It takes time to build trust, as people do not understand the benefit of the process from the start. They are happy to come and meet on a permanent basis, but, as expressed by the NFP/NPO, communities also want to

see “*immediate results, but in the cases of passport registration or creation of job opportunities, fast results cannot be achieved in a short time*”.

Mobilisation is difficult and requires a creative approach. For example, in Darnytsia, a Sunday Roma language course was started as part of ROMED2. It acts as a magnet for the community. In Pereyaslav-Khmelnytski region, in the village of Erkvitisi, CAG and local authorities helped to deliver food to three families where children had malnutrition problems. It helped to create trust with the municipality and demonstrate that the project could deliver tangible improvements to the community.

Interaction with local authorities

The cooperation is structured around the Working Groups which are set up in each location. Each municipality assigns a person responsible for cooperation on Roma issues. The dialogue is supported by having regular (on average once per month) meetings of the Working Groups, where Roma issues are raised. In addition, action plans for cooperation define a set of activities, such as the celebration of International Roma Day, seminars dedicated to the Roma Holocaust, information and public awareness work among the Roma community and assistance to vulnerable groups. CAG members participate in all meetings of these Working Groups.

To encourage and recognise the growing commitment from local municipalities to addressing Roma issues, Chiricli initiated a Ukraine Roma Pride celebration in 2014. A special event was organised in October 2015 with the participation of CAGs, local authorities, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Social Policy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other NGOs. ROMED2 municipalities received awards for progress made in registering illegal Roma housing (Uzhgorod), providing better social services (Pereyaslav-Khmelnytskiy), facilitating registration of documents (Odessa) and providing assistance to the travelling Roma community (Darnytsia).

In an effort to facilitate cooperation, 147 social workers were trained by the state Institute of Family and Youth Policy. These training programmes helped social workers and government officials from key ROMED regions to understand Roma issues and learn more about the state strategy and ROMED2 approach, as well as to meet directly with Roma mediators. In terms of quality of the training, 68% of participants (mostly social workers) reported in the Institute’s evaluation survey that they were happy with the quality.

Ukraine launched a major effort to reform its national police, starting with a new police patrol force. In cooperation with the Ministry of Interior, 34 newly-recruited police officers participated in the training on non-discrimination toward Roma. Representatives of ROMED2 participating municipalities from Kyiv, Kirovograd, Pereyaslav-Khmelnytsky, Berehovo and Cherkasy attended the training. It allowed Chiricli and its mediators to establish good working relations with the newly-recruited police officers.

Overall, cooperation with authorities developed well. Odessa demonstrated some slowdown due to political changes after the local elections and appointment of the new Governor. The previous contact person left and they have downsized personnel, but currently the cooperation is gradually advancing, as mediators try to work at all levels (municipal, oblast, regions). The activity of the Working Group was also interrupted, as there was no contact person from the local administration.

Some other minor challenges included: changing the composition of members of CAGs; political changes due to elections or reforms at local level (turnover of public officials is high); lack of resources from the state and local budgets; and limited number of donors who support such work in Ukraine.

Efficiency of provided support and resources

The NFP/NPO expressed satisfaction with the level of financial support provided to carry out ROMED2 activities in Ukraine. Most resources covered training and external regional meetings at national and local levels, as well as the daily operational activities of the NFP and NPO. The ROMED management team of the Council of Europe was very responsive and applied a tailored approach. Approvals of financial requests were timely and fast so funding could be received within two weeks.

One possible deficiency, as expressed by the NFP, is the lack of funding for community projects. At this stage, only small resources are allocated in local budgets for direct assistance to families in need or crisis. It is vital in order to build trust and show quick wins and results for people. Such funding could cover local mediators' work with children (like the purchase of colouring books or other tools to engage kids) or medium-sized infrastructural improvement in the settlements. This helps to "melt the ice" in relationships. Since ROMACT was not operating in Ukraine, larger funding for community projects was lacking.

1.3.3 Results and impacts towards stimulating change in Roma communities

Impacts on empowerment of communities

At this stage, the capacity of local CAGs is quite low. They are dependent both on mediators, facilitators and on the commitment of the NFP/NPO. The work of the CAG clearly improves the self-esteem and trust of the communities. Roma communities are proud to showcase their culture during International Roma Day or be part of helping other marginalised Roma, in particularly those living in settlements. When local authorities reach out to communities, for example, a visit of Santa Claus organised by Darnytsia local authority to the settlement in December 2015, it makes Roma feel part of the wider community.

Local authorities recognise CAGs as legitimate representatives of the Roma community. The NFP introduced all the mediators to local officials and they have since developed good working cooperation.

In the medium term, the issue of sustainability of these groups could be resolved either by connecting them to existing local NGOs, establishing a new association or registering local self-organised citizen groups. Local citizen groups could be established by the community to represent the needs and interests of citizens that reside in a certain territory according to the law on the "Creation of Citizen Self-organising Bodies". It is a more flexible instrument than an NGO. They would require mentoring, training and financial assistance to continue and scale up their activities.

Concrete results and impacts in communities

ROMED2 helped improve the following services in various sectors:

- **Condition in settlements:** waste collection in Bortnychi (Darnytsia Region). Cooperation between the NFP and local authorities led to an agreement with the local waste collection company to provide a service in the settlement once a month. The service is covered financially by Chiricli as National Support Organisation. Water and sewage systems were installed in the settlement, assistance was provided with construction materials and wood for winter in Uzhgorod, in cooperation with two charitable foundations, Blago and House of Charity.
- **Education:** new Sunday Roma language and cultural programme established (Darnytsia). Ten children attend classes on a regular basis. Two new young educational mediators were trained

and succeeded, in just two months, to bring 15 Roma children back to school after long-term absence. A new pre-school will be built for Roma children in Zakarpattia oblast.

- **Documentation:** agreements with the State Centres for Homeless to register Roma, who need registration to apply for passports. Odessa Oblast Migration Service will pilot a simplified procedure for Roma registration. Mediators help citizens apply for passports, birth certificates, pension certificates, disability documents or house registration books, often the first step to receiving any kind of social services from the state.
- **Healthcare:** over 5,000 Roma were registered for general health check-ups, over 2,000 children were vaccinated and over 2,000 underwent TB scans.⁵
- **Employment:** active work with the heads of municipal employment centres to increase awareness on Roma unemployment and promote the idea of special training programmes for Roma. In Uzhgorod, the idea of funding for social enterprises that could help address employment issues for Roma is being discussed.

In sporadic cases, cultural Inclusion is improving. International Roma Day is getting more recognition from local authorities. In spring 2016, both Darnytsia region and Pereyaslav-Khmelnysky held cultural events to showcase Romani culture, build awareness and break down stereotypes about Roma in their communities.

Impacts on changes of policies at local and national level

At national level, ROMED2 helped to promote the establishment of the National Inter-Agency Working Group for Roma and contributed to the development of the Action Plan for the Implementation of the National Roma Inclusion Strategy. The Programme also helped raise awareness on Roma issues and on national media during International Roma Day. Most importantly, ROMED2, in cooperation with the Ministry of Social Policy, contributed to the development of national standards on mediation.

To address youth issues, a national seminar on Roma youth was organised between ROMED and the Youth Department of the Council of Europe. Participants discussed the national strategy on activism for young people with the Ukrainian Ministry of Youth and Sport. This strategy includes a training course for Roma youth NGOs and activists and an international training course for Roma youth organisations, to be held in Kharkiv. The event will be co-organised by ROMED and the Youth Department of the Council of Europe in autumn 2016.

At local level, the Programme contributed to the development of Action Plans to implement the strategy. As a result, two municipalities, Pereyaslav-Khmelnysky and Zakarpattia, have included in the local budget funding for Roma inclusion. The shortcoming of improving cooperation in Darnytsia region is that Kyiv has no municipal action plan for Roma, and thus assigns no funding citywide for Roma issues.

1.3.4 Sustainability

At this stage, the sustainability of the local processes initiated is weak. Cooperation at some level will continue, but a lot depends on the facilitators, activism of local NGOs and on the National Support Organisation, Chiricli.

There are several factors that positively contribute to sustainability, among them:

- Strong, well-trained cohorts of Roma mediators, as they become pillars of support to develop CAGs;

⁵ Chiricli rationale provided to the Ministry of Social Policy and Labour in support of mediators in Ukraine, 2016

- Development of Action Plans for the Implementation of the Roma National Strategy, as they require local authorities to deliver;
- An Inter-Agency Working group could facilitate the process and monitor the implementation of the Roma inclusion strategy;
- The trust that the ROMED NFP/NPO and facilitators have managed to build with local government authorities;
- The positive image that civil society can be a partner in solving social issues of the Roma minority;
- Allocation of resources in the local budgets of Uzhorod and Pereyaslav-Khmelnytsky to the implementation of the Roma strategy;
- Roma representatives elected in local councils (in Zakarpattia), who can advance the Roma agenda at the policy-making level (one MP from the Roma community in Uzhgorod). Ten mediators ran as candidates in local elections, amongst them one woman.
- Roma mediators were employed by the state after completing the new social services programme for Roma mediators mentioned in ROMED1, as they could reach out to the communities.
- The decentralised fiscal process launched in December 2015 provides more resources at local level. Further decentralisation could create more autonomy for local governments to set priorities and assign funding based on local needs of Roma communities.
- The NFP's initiative to reinforce the ROMED2 network by establishing the Ukrainian Alliance of Cities for Roma Inclusion. Such an alliance would invite cities interested in addressing Roma issues to become members. Current ROMED2 municipalities could become founding members of such an alliance. This would help disseminate the ROMED model nationwide.

It is important to consider the following risks and constraints to sustainability:

- Personality-driven approach, where it often depends on leadership in local authorities. If leadership changes, the work often has to start again from scratch;
- The NFP risk of burnout or change of work. She is really committed and highly-respected, both at national and regional levels, as a highly-qualified professional who could represent Ukraine also at international level;
- High turnover of CAG members due to the migration of Roma;
- Weak governance institutions in Ukraine often impede implementation of policies, where government bureaucracy is inefficient, corrupt and lacks accountability;
- Resistance of local authorities to make a formal commitment and to approve action plans.

1.4 Lessons and recommendations

The programme on Roma inclusion needs to continue, as more work is required to sustain existing achievements and reinforce impact. There are several avenues of support that are needed for the programme:

- Provision of financial support to sustain the network of the mediators and provide further capacity development;
- Increased engagement of emerging Roma youth networks (such as the one being built by Chiricli and the fellowship network of the International Renaissance Foundation);
- Support in creation of local Roma associations/NGOs around CAG leaders to allow access to financial resources at the local level, either via sub-contracting from Chiricli or state social contracting/local grants, when such programmes will be announced.

1.4.1 Specific recommendations for ROMED1:

For the Council of Europe and the European Union:

- In Ukraine, external conditionality helps advance change. Use external pressure and conditionality from the EU Association Agreement, Council of Europe and the OSCE to advance the implementation of state commitments declared in the national Roma strategy, new strategy for support of civil society⁶ and new human rights strategy⁷. Voice the issues of Roma mediators at the level of the Special OSCE Commissioner for National Minorities to advance the institutionalisation of their profession. Use international reports, such as the report of the implementation of the UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women.⁸
- Continue training of mediators to keep up with the speed of legislative changes in Ukraine that take place as part of a wider reform process and decentralisation;
- Develop more networking opportunities inside Ukraine and within the ROMED European network. Some of the regional models could be scaled up to national level. More exchanges of experience can enhance the transfer of ideas and good practices across countries.
- Increase financial resources for mediators to be able to afford some basic materials. Develop small grants for social services that mediators could apply for to help deliver medical services, access to water, gas, additional training for children to improve school performance and cover transportation costs. This could require co-funding from local sources, such as local NGOs or budgets.
- Use the Council of Europe's Congress of Local and Regional Authorities to encourage local authorities in Ukraine to become active participants.
- Improve understanding of Roma problems in Ukraine by funding more research and effective communication of its results.

For the National Focal Point/National Project Officer:

- Build the capacity of mediators, especially on the psychological aspects of communication; develop skills in educational mediation, techniques of positive motivation of communities for action, knowledge of international conventions on human rights and Roma inclusion. Provide skills in local budgeting and train mediators on ways to feed community needs into policy-making processes, focus on gender-based budgeting and train mediators on how this approach could be applied to national minorities.
- Conduct long-term training for mediators in partnership with social workers, perhaps develop an annual curriculum with several sessions rather than one-off training sessions.
- Develop links between mediators and other local and national NGOs working on Roma and general human rights issues. Connect them to groups that are members of the EU-Ukraine Civil Society Platform⁹ established as part of the new EU-Ukraine Association Agreement.
- Expand the inclusion of mediators into the state system of social services by intensifying the work with the Centres of Social Services to promote mediation and new standards of mediation services.
- Encourage Roma NGOs and mediators to apply for funding as part of the state social contracting, then train them to apply for this funding.
- Engage more Roma youth to be future mediators and active in Roma issues. Use such avenues as sports and arts to engage young people. Elaborate a strategy for Roma youth. Train them in

⁶ <http://www.president.gov.ua/documents/682016-19805>

⁷ <http://www.president.gov.ua/documents/5012015-19364>

⁸ <http://www.unfpa.org.ua/eng/publications/559.html>

⁹ <http://www.eesc.europa.eu/?i=portal.en.news.35487>

project management. Develop a youth social worker training programme. The youth wing of Chiricli could be a good start, as well as the participants of the Roma educational fellowship of the International Renaissance Foundation.

1.4.2 Specific recommendations for ROMED2:

- Include organisational development and capacity-building components for CAGs and participating Roma NGOs. Organise fellowships or twinning exchanges among similar groups within the ROMED2 network to share best practices among peers.
- Encourage more networking between participating municipalities and also use conditionality. For example, if a city would like to be part of the Programme, they should employ at least one mediator as part of social services.
- Raise the Programme's profile by holding regular meetings of the ROMED Management Team from Strasbourg with high-level government officials in Ukraine.
- Closely monitor domestic dynamics: see if new opportunities could open up. Ukraine is in transition and structural reforms are under way. Consider engaging with the National Reform Council within the Administration of the President.
- Decentralisation offers new opportunities but also poses new challenges. Capacity development is needed for mediators, local government and local members of councils in how to evaluate community needs, how to prepare budget proposals, and how to do participatory budgeting.
- Encourage Roma to engage in political life: run for local councils, national parliaments. Provide training on how to run campaigns.
- See if synergies could be built around other European Union and Council of Europe projects on local governance, decentralisation and human rights. Roma debate should also be included in a general discourse on these issues. Engage Roma representatives in other programme conferences. For example, the European Union has launched a new decentralisation programme to support local development, and it is important that ROMED2 municipalities engage with it: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-15-6263_en.htm
- Consider opening a Council of Europe special Roma project office in Kyiv to monitor and assist national authorities to implement the Roma inclusion programme and its national strategy. This could raise the status of the ROMED2 Programme and help put more pressure of national authorities.