

The National Strategy for Poverty Decrease (prepared by the Government) explicitly emphasized the Roma population as the most marginalized community in the country. It may be noted that the general conditions with Roma in Republic of Macedonia have not been changed radically in the past years.

Still, as a special success for integration of Roma in Macedonia, represents the fact that the Decade for Inclusion of Roma was successfully started. In its framework, the National Strategy for Roma in Macedonia was produced, prioritizing four topics: education, health, employment and housing. It was officially adopted by the Government of Republic of Macedonia.

The Government appointed an inter-ministry working group in order to prepare the national strategies for Roma in the four identified priority topics in the framework of the Decade. Also, by the Government, a Roma person was appointed Deputy Minister for Labour and Social Affairs by the end of 2004, which is the highest political position, after the independence of the country. Having in mind the fact that this Ministry received the obligation for implementation of the initiative "Decade for Inclusion of Roma" on national level, this appointment has strengthened the positive impressions from the Government's policy on the required framework and conditions for implementation of the Decade.

There is a significant positive step made forward for Roma as ethnic community in Republic of Macedonia in comparison with the other countries. According to the standing provisions, Roma are equal in their legally guaranteed rights and obligations as other citizens in Republic of Macedonia. Yet, the efforts undertaken so far remain partial, unconnected, and not in position to solve the problems on more general level. With reference to the requirements of the Roma community, according to the undertaken actions and efforts for improvement of the situation, the following four key areas are highlighted: education, employment, housing and health, as well as human rights (discrimination), gender relations and poverty which are permeating in all segments of living. MCIC implements this project with view of overcoming the abovementioned identified weaknesses and providing increased contribution towards the needs of the Roma community in Macedonia.

The overall goal of the project was to provide contribution to more effective implementation of the Decade for inclusion of Roma in Macedonia, through the process of decentralization.

The objective of the project was to provide contribution to more effective advocacy and lobbying for inclusion and implementation of the Action Plans from the Roma Decade on local level.

The achieved result was efficient functioning of the lobby group for advocacy and lobbying within the Center for Roma Community “Drom” Kumanovo and its visibility in the public. The activities in the project consisted of activities for information and activities for lobbying and advocacy, through which information was disseminated on the upcoming “Decade for Inclusion of Roma” (2005-2015). In the framework of the Project, the lobby group realized several meetings with the representatives from the line ministries, namely: a meeting with the Deputy Minister for Education and Science; with the representatives from the Education Development Bureau within the MES; with the Deputy Minister of Labour and Social Affairs and representatives from the same Ministry. The meetings held discussed the process and successfulness of the implementation of the Roma Decade related activities.

The time period for implementation of the project was July 1st – December 31st 2007. The direct expenditure of the project amounted to 130,000.00 MKD. All funds were received from the Danish Inter-Church Aid (DCA).