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WORLD ROMA FEDERATION



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Parallel Report for the European Union's first Voluntary Review

Introduction

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is a global commitment to eradicate poverty, achieve prosperity, and protect the environment for present and future generations. From the outset, the Roma community, comprising over 12 million people throughout Europe, has faced historical marginalization, social exclusion, and discrimination. As a result, implementing the 2030 Agenda is essential for the social and economic advancement of the Roma community while ensuring their integration into society.

This HLPF 2023 Shadow Report presents a comprehensive analysis and evaluation of progress made by the United Nations (UN) and its Member States in adopting measures to address issues faced by the Roma community concerning SDGs. The report relies on research materials such as voluntary common guidelines provided by major groups and other stakeholders involved in implementing the 2030 Agenda, assessments of Member States' National Roma Strategic Frameworks by the European Commission, and the Fundamental Rights Report 2023 published by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA).

Progress in implementing SDGs for the Roma community

Sustainable Development Goals emphasize "leaving no one behind," signifying an inclusive approach where marginalized communities such as Roma should be prioritized. Several measures have been taken by both EU bodies and individual Member States to address challenges faced by the Roma community in achieving sustainable development. However, progress has been limited. The Roma community continues to face challenges in areas such as economic growth, social inclusion, and education.

Members states have adopted National Roma Strategic Frameworks in response to existing stigmatization, discrimination, unemployment, poor housing conditions, inadequate access to education and healthcare facilities that hinder progress regarding SDGs within this population group. However, challenges related to the implementation of these frameworks, inadequate resources, and insufficient data analysis remain obstacles to the successful realization of SDGs. The success of the 2030 Agenda to eradicate poverty and promote sustainable development goals largely depends on the integration of marginalized communities, including the Roma community. Ensuring equal access to opportunities and resources, improving living conditions, and eliminating discrimination against Roma people are crucial steps towards achieving sustainable development goals and eradicating poverty.

Roma communities continue to face significant challenges in eradicating poverty. Although several measures have been taken by different stakeholders, it remains a daunting task to improve the economic status of Roma people. The situation is further exacerbated by issues such as social exclusion, poor access to education, and inadequate healthcare facilities. These challenges must be addressed for the Roma community to realize the full potential of SDG 1 - alleviate poverty

Addressing poverty and hunger simultaneously has always been challenging, particularly for marginalized communities such as the Roma. Under SDG 2 - Zero Hunger, there has been some progress in increasing sustainable agriculture and promoting small-scale farming to eradicate hunger in different areas and populations. However, the Roma community still faces difficulties in accessing adequate and nutritious food due to factors such as poverty and discrimination. To effectively address hunger and achieve SDG 2, it is crucial to prioritize the integration of Roma people and ensure their access to sufficient food, adequate nutrition, and suitable resources. The Roma community suffers from various health issues, including mental health challenges, which makes it difficult to achieve SDG 3 - good health and well-being. This population group faces barriers in accessing adequate healthcare facilities and resources, which exacerbates their healthcare issues. The integration of the Roma population in healthcare policies and programs is essential to promoting good health and well-being and achieving SDG 3. Roma communities must be given equal access to healthcare services, including mental health services, and measures should be established to eliminate discrimination and stigmatization in healthcare facilities.

On education (SDG 4), there have been consistent efforts to improve access to education for Roma children. Policies include provisions for free transportation, scholarships, supportive measures such as mentorship, and desegregation plans. However, segregation and discrimination against Roma children persist in schools. Additionally, lack of sufficient support from local authorities hampers the realization of inclusive education for the Roma community

The Roma community faces significant challenges in achieving gender equality, which is the focus of SDG 5. Gender issues such as early marriages and limited educational opportunities for Roma girls hinder the progress towards gender equality within the Roma community. Reducing gender disparities, improving access to education and increasing female empowerment are essential for the realization of SDG 5 and the overall goal of sustainable development. As such, it is imperative to invest in measures to promote gender equality and women's empowerment within the Roma community to overcome barriers and achieve the SDGs.

Access to clean water and adequate sanitation is a fundamental human right essential for public health and environmental sustainability. However, Roma communities continue to face challenges in accessing safe water and sanitation facilities, hindering the progress towards realizing SDG 6. The situation is further exacerbated by poverty, discrimination and inadequate infrastructure. Effective and sustainable policies and programs are necessary to guarantee the Roma population their right to clean water and sanitation, which will promote good health and well-being, environmental sustainability and social inclusion in line with SDG 6.

The Roma population is often marginalized in terms of energy access, and their needs have to be considered in promoting affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all under SDG 7. Roma are often unable to access modern and clean energy sources, which hampers efforts towards sustainable development goals. To address this challenge, there is a need for investment in renewable energy, effective energy policies, and the development of energy infrastructure that incorporates the Roma community's unique needs. Furthermore, it is crucial to promote the participation of the Roma community in decision-making and implementation of energy policies and programs.

Roma communities also face significant challenges in accessing decent work and economic growth, which are key targets under SDG 8. One of the primary barriers to decent work for Roma people is discrimination, which impedes their access to job opportunities and fair wages. Additionally, lack of access to education and skills development programs limits Roma people's potential for economic growth and perpetuates poverty within the community. Therefore, it is crucial to tackle discrimination in the job market and provide Roma people with access to skills development programs and other resources to promote economic growth and support the realization of SDG 8.

Roma communities have historically faced barriers in accessing affordable and sustainable infrastructure, including transportation. These challenges have resulted in exclusion from key resources and opportunities, which negatively impacts progress towards achieving SDG 9 - Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure. Therefore, incorporating Roma communities into infrastructure planning and development is crucial to promote sustainable economic growth and social inclusion. By providing access to affordable and reliable infrastructure, including transportation, Roma communities can better engage in economic and social activities and effectively work towards achieving the SDGs.

Roma communities face widespread discrimination and social exclusion, making SDG 10 - Reduced Inequalities a crucial target for ensuring their rights to equality and non-discrimination. Addressing the root causes of discrimination against Roma people is essential to ensure that they have equal opportunities and access to resources. Moreover, promoting Roma participation in decision-making is essential to advocate for their own needs and promote equality. By prioritizing the promotion of Roma inclusion and participation, progress towards achieving SDG 10 can be made, resulting in a more equitable and just society for all.

The housing situation (SDG 11) of Roma communities remains largely problematic across Member States. Unsuitable living conditions, overcrowding, lack of basic facilities such as water supply and sanitation constitute ongoing challenges. The implementation of housing policies has been marred by evictions and relocation of Roma families to segregated settlements. Eviction solely aggravates the existing problem by leading to further social exclusion.

In addition to the challenges discussed in the previous paragraphs, Roma communities also face significant barriers to achieving the targets outlined in SDGs 12 to 17. These goals focus on responsible consumption and production, climate action, sustainable use of resources, peace and justice, and partnerships for the goals. Roma people often lack adequate access to resources and infrastructure necessary to pursue sustainable lifestyles and participate in decision-making

related to climate change and the environment. Addressing these challenges requires the active inclusion of Roma communities in policymaking and implementation through meaningful participation and collaboration.

Recommendations

To realize the aspirations laid out in the 2030 Agenda concerning the Roma community's inclusion and development, concerted efforts by UN bodies and Member States are necessary. The following recommendations aim to enhance the implementation of SDGs within the context of Roma communities:

1. **Foster inclusive dialogue:** Engaging Roma representatives in policy discussions is a crucial first step towards ensuring that their voices are heard and their unique concerns are addressed. By actively involving these representatives in the decision-making process, policies can be developed that cater to their specific needs and forge a stronger sense of ownership among the communities they benefit. Collaborating with Roma stakeholders not only garners essential insights but also fosters trust and understanding among different parties involved in this inclusive Vision.
2. **Reinforce monitoring mechanisms:** The National Roma Strategic Frameworks have been established in many countries as roadmaps to guide efforts towards fulfilling the SDGs within this marginalized context. Nonetheless, more can be done to bolster monitoring mechanisms that allow for consistent evaluation of their execution. Transparent evaluations of progress will hold governments accountable for their promise to improve the quality of life experienced by the Roma community. To do this effectively, data collection should be comprehensive and culturally-sensitive, with indicators tailored for assessing key areas pertinent to inclusion.
3. **Enhance funding allocation:** Greater investment must be directed towards initiatives designed specifically for fostering positive outcomes within the Roma community. Ensuring more adequate financial support will strengthen endeavors aimed at improving education, healthcare services, housing conditions, and socio-economic integration – all prerequisites for meaningful change. A solid financial foundation is essential to empower local organizations and mobilize resources necessary for both promoting the goals laid out within 2030 Agenda and addressing unique challenges faced by impoverished ethnic groups.
4. **Focus on capacity-building:** It is vital to build comprehensive internal capacities that empower individuals within Roma communities to contribute positively towards key development areas. By investing in skill development and offering vocational training opportunities, community members can improve their livelihoods and lead more meaningful lives. Capacity building also involves taking measures to increase access to essential services like quality education, healthcare, and legal assistance – providing the necessary tools for personal growth and whole-community advancement.
5. **Address discrimination and promote tolerance:** Efforts must be made to foster a culture of tolerance not just within Roma communities but also within the general population. This includes creating public awareness campaigns aimed at dismantling stereotypes, combating discrimination

in legal frameworks, and instigating prejudice-free dialogues between diverse stakeholders. By promoting mutual respect, understanding, and empathy among all members of society, social cohesion can be reinforced – an indispensable component for the sustainable integration of Roma people.

6. Encourage inter-agency collaboration: The numerous challenges faced by the Roma community cannot be adequately tackled by solely acting in silos or along narrowly defined mandates. Therefore, it is imperative to establish partnerships among various stakeholders – including governmental bodies, international organizations, civil society, the private sector, and Roma community leaders – to create synergies that will contribute towards more efficient use of available resources and multiply the impact of implemented strategies.

In conclusion, these recommendations aim to pave the way for sustainable growth and equitable development for Roma communities across Europe by harnessing a unified approach aligned with the 2030 Agenda objectives. By prioritizing inclusive dialogue, reinforcing monitoring systems, allocating sufficient funding to targeted interventions, building capacities among community members and institutions, addressing discriminatory attitudes, and fostering collaboration among key players, significant strides can be made towards a brighter future for thousands of marginalized people across the continent.

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