



Recommendations and conclusions of conference

“Do Roma Women Have the Right to Safe Life?”

Sarajevo, 16 – 17 October 2014

Over 70 participants from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Republic of Serbia, Republic of Croatia, Albania, Macedonia, Rumania and Spain participated at the conference „Do Roma Women Have the Right to Safe Life?“ held in Sarajevo, October 16-17, 2014. The conference was organized by CARE International with support of the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees of BiH and partner organizations involved in the project.

Purpose of this conference was: To ensure in existing National Action Plans of BiH, Montenegro and Republic of Serbia adequate policies/programs and trainings for Roma women in regards to reproductive health and gender based violence and ensure them the access to direct support and assistance.

During two-day work 18 presentations were presented divided in three main groups:

- Sexual and reproductive health and safety of Roma women
- Gender based violence, trafficking and safety of Roma women
- Good - bad practices
- Resolution 1325 women, peace and security; Roma women in civil sector – support to safety of Roma women

After presentations and discussions the conference participants came to the following conclusions, divided in the following topics and areas:

ROLE OF INSTITUTIONS:

All participants agreed that institutions have important role in process of implementation of Resolution 1325: world, peace and safety with accent on everyday life of Roma women. Institutions in Republic of Serbia, Montenegro and BiH can play a crucial role and through activities in the field of legislation and adopting of adequate strategies. When role of institutions in question the following topics were defined:

- Researching of functioning of institutional mechanisms (national boards, offices for Roma inclusion, parliamentary committees, boards, etc.)
 - It is needed to adequately map existing mechanisms which have already been defined and set within or at institutions. It is necessary to define their role and models to which they are established and how they operate. To map lever of participation of NGOs in institutional mechanisms and their role in decision making processes.



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- Models and mechanisms can be used as an example of positive practices in the region.
- Cooperation of civil society:
 - All participants agreed it is necessary to improve cooperation of civil society and institutions. The current cooperation has not been sufficient and according to the participants has not been established following real partnership principles which is why the cooperation needs to be straightened, but also establish partnership relationship with civil society with signing of Memorandums and protocols.
- Mobile team forming:
 - As one of the initiatives which arose from the conference is a suggestion that within institutions as one of the necessary mechanisms with support of the donor are formed “mobile teams”. These teams could be involved in process of strengthening of communication among stakeholders in the field.
Roma could be part of these teams increasing the degree of inclusion of Roma in decision making process.
- Institutional capacity building for working with minority groups through education on civil society and cooperation with non-governmental organizations:
 - Although there is good will and desire for cooperation, through certain indicatives and projects, it is necessary to increase degree of being informed and skills of representatives of institutions to work and cooperate with organizations of civil society, from including SCO in decision making process to public relations, reporting, etc.
 - Sensibilization of employees of the Police, Center for Social Work, Prosecution office and increase of employment rates of Roma women and man within institutions.
- Defining and analysis of existing programs to adapt and improve in order to achieve better education of Roma population in all levels of education (preschool to university):
 - It is necessary to perform an adequate analysis of existing educational programs in order to be able to provide appropriate recommendations for the improvement of formal education programs so they enhance in to new trends and flows in education, as well as recommendations from the field could be included in these programs for their improvement and greater efficiency;
- Adoption of official decisions on participation of Roma representatives in implementation of strategies for Roma men and women:
 - Although there is a declarative interest of institutions for greater inclusion of Roma men and women in institutions at all levels there is no formal obligation for inclusion of Roma men and women. Adoption of formal decisions and defining of appropriate models of communication for inclusion of Roma men and women the cooperation would be formal and more professional and in that case the cooperation would depend on individual positions or representatives of institutions but it would be an obligation for all institutions regardless of who holds the power.



1. ROMA MEDIATORS AND COORDINATORS:

A good model in certain countries in the region is so called Roma mediators, facilitators or coordinators. Where ever this model is in place (Serbia) excellent and positive results have been achieved in different areas: social protection, education, employment, so conference participants agreed that this model should be developed in other countries and regions with support of international and other donors, but with the commitment of institutions to take over the employment. To do so as part of the process it is necessary to define this role with supporting decisions and budgets.

It is still needed to develop a good network of primary and other forms of protection in order to be able to incorporate as many Roma women. It is important that health programs are monitored or led by competent institutions and have budget allocated.

2. CROSS-SECTORAL COOPERATION:

All conference participants agreed that it is necessary to initiate and improve existing cooperation at all levels through cross-sectoral joining of the following stakeholders:

- Relevant Roma representative bodies
- Centers for social work
- Non-governmental organizations
- Police departments
- Ministry of internal affairs
- Ministry of education

Cooperation with Roma NGOs is very important and it is necessary to work to straighten communication.

Work principles of cross-sectoral cooperation should become official decisions, strategies or documents of government institutions – supported by certain budget funds.

- Different monitoring processes can be provided through cross-sectoral cooperation in order to identify good practices and problems occurred in area of health and social policies;
- Institutions of civil society can offer control mechanisms;
- Start mechanisms and principles of networking of representatives of government and non-government institutions;
- Defining representatives within cross-sectoral groups officially nominated to ensure that the change in government doesn't affect them.



3. DISTRIBUTION OF LOCAL FUNDS:

As important conclusion of conference participants is a topic related to distribution of existing funds intended as support of addressing existential issues of Roma population with accent on Roma women and for this purpose it is necessary:

- To define priorities regarding certain areas through public discussions;
- Establish mechanisms for transparently spending of these funds (public calls, commissions for fund allocation).

4. INICIATIVES OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL SECTOR:

Important role in prevention of gender based violence as well as care for reproductive health of Roma men and women have non-governmental organizations. Data presented at the conferences showed that in all areas projects implemented by non-governmental organizations achieved stunning results, thus this work should be continued but with greater support of institutions and making commitments on their sides.

The participants defined the following possible initiatives that could be realized through numerous projects, and this conclusion can serve as a guideline in design of new project proposals:

- Lobbying and informing campaigns of Roma population;
- Political organization and participation of Roma especially Roma women;
- Active community work; informing, support;
- Monitoring – participation in monitoring of government and other institutions regarding implementation of AP;
- Lobbying for Roma representatives in government institutions;
- Analysis and identification of state in the field with goal to collect information for work of government in processes of decision making;
- Informing of local community groups in order to inform, educate, and mediate
- Service Community Centers
- Networking of non-governmental sector in achieving greater impact and efficiency in launching lobbying initiatives.

5. GOOD PRACTICES:

To develop appropriate strategies and projects it is necessary to make an analysis of examples of positive practices in the region in order to use them as positive models in all levels.

Institution representatives should educate and provide financial and all other support to present and future mediators in communities which have been proven as models of positive practices.



6. MONITORING:

A special conclusion is a necessity of unique monitoring system and evaluation to all programs of improvement of situation of Roma women and men.

7. USING MEDIA IN PROMOTION, INFORMING AND EDUCATION:

All conference participants agreed that media role in promotion of different information, attitudes and initiatives regards to Roma population is insufficient and it is necessary

(whether it's about starting an initiative through various projects or memorandums of cooperation):

- Suggest, design different media informative and educative campaigns;
- Suggest, design different lobbying campaigns.