

We are part of society!

The social inclusion of the **Roma**, **internally displaced persons and** **returnees in Serbian**



Project location

SERBIA (NOVI SAD, KRAGUJEVAC, POŽAREVAC)

Project goal

The severely marginalised Roma minorities of Serbia should gain the right to participate in society and give themselves the chance of a better future. Access to education, training and work will strengthen their ability to stand up for their basic rights and to become a strong part of society.

Project content

The social and economic inclusion of the Roma, internally displaced persons and returnees in Serbia will be promoted through individual counselling services, the support of local Roma self-representation organisations and by combating anti-Roma sentiment.

Target group

1,350 people belonging to the marginalised minorities of the Roma, 18 members of staff working for Roma self-representation organisations and 54 representatives from local administrative structures (indirect project reach: 5,472 people).

Partner organisation

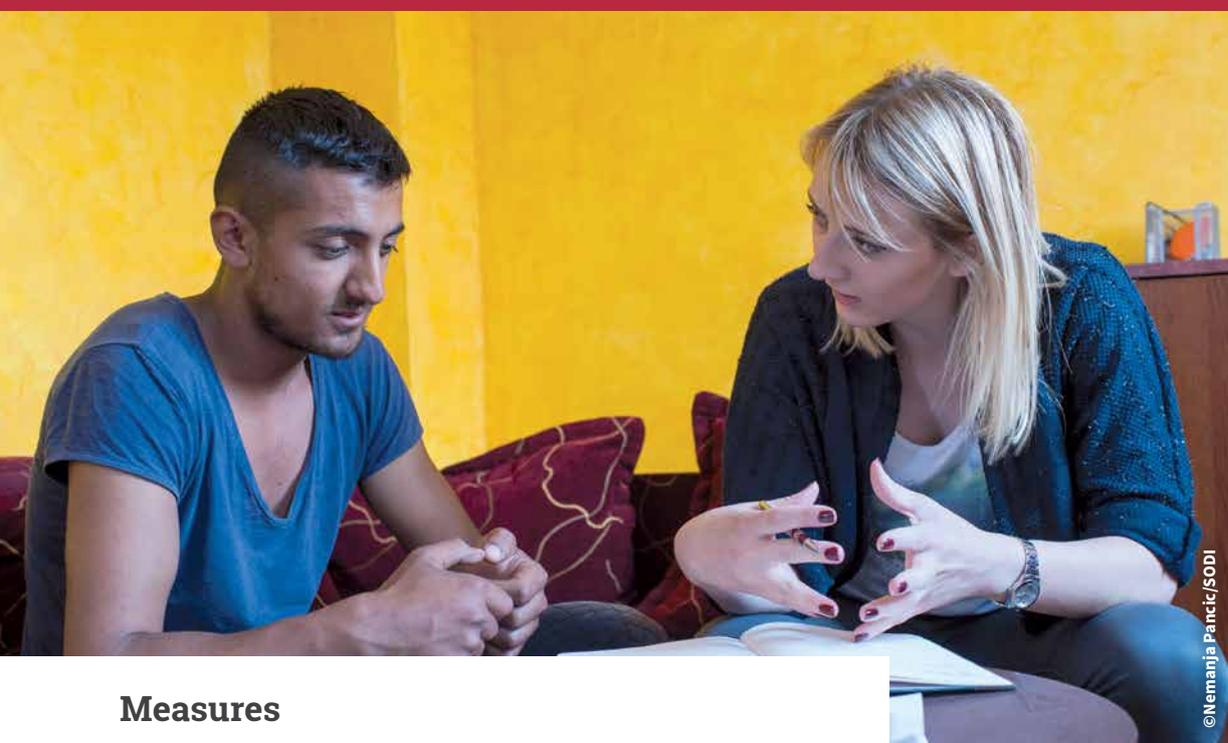
Forum Roma Srbije (FRS)

The present situation

The Roma's living conditions in Serbia are precarious: the vast majority of the Roma are unemployed, almost half of them live in settlements without electricity, water and sewerage and members of these minorities have a life expectancy somewhere between 10 to 15 years lower than the national average. The strong discrimination against this ethnic group can also be clearly seen in their restricted access to basic services guaranteed by human rights such as education and healthcare. **Many Roma only attend primary education and only four out of five Roma are able to read and write. Consequently, their prospects for the future are drastically limited.**

The continuing discrimination against Roma minorities in Serbia has serious consequences for the persons affected. They are increasingly excluded from the national majority societies while their living conditions continue to worsen. It is true that the state has developed and ratified strategies for the inclusion of the Roma minorities. However, in addition to the appropriate financial resources, local administrative structures frequently lack the access to Roma communities required for the implementation of these strategies. These parallel societies need to be broken up and everybody given a chance in life.

For this reason, SODI is championing the sustainable social and economic inclusion of the Roma in Serbia. Access to education, training and work as well as individual counselling will strengthen the Roma people's ability to exercise their fundamental rights and to participate in national societies on an equal footing.



Individual social, psychological and legal counselling strengthen the Roma's ability to stand up for their fundamental right to education, health and involvement.

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Measures

The project offers **individual support** in the form of **psychological and social counselling, legal aid when applying for documents and social benefits and access to employment and education**. Furthermore, links will be forged between the local authorities and the Roma minority communities in the communities that have been selected for the project. Links here include local Roma self-representation organisations and the directors of community centres. They are a fundamental factor in the social inclusion of the Roma since, as intermediaries, they can find out what the people's specific needs are in the first instance before putting them forward to the responsible authorities. Furthermore, it is expected that the sustainable integration of the Roma's interests and needs at the local government level will be achieved with the development of urban action plans and public discussion meetings. **In addition, the teams from the community centres and the SODI partner organisation Forum Roma Srbije will be helped to increase their capacity through joint workshops on such topics as project management, strategies for advocacy work and the combating of antiziganism.**

Find out more at: www.roma-inklusion.sodi.de



Almost half of the Roma people live in settlements without electricity, water and sewerage. They are excluded from society owing to discrimination and a lack of future prospects.

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The community centres run by SODI's partner organisations serve as sites for education, legal counselling and inclusion. They are the binding link and mouthpiece between the Roma minorities and the local authorities.

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Your contact person at SODI

Katja Wadewitz | katja.wadewitz@sodi.de | 030 920 90 93 16

SODI is a not-for-profit, non-governmental organisation that is independent, critical and non-denominational - for an equal world. SODI stands for solidarity: with initiatives and organisations in the Global South, we are committed to the emancipation of people and the strengthening of their active participation in society. We combine our project work abroad with our educational work in Germany - fighting for a changes of perspective in the development cooperation.

www.sodi.de