

# *Do Evaluations*

# Matter?

## *Workshop Publication*

Editors: Anna-Mária Bíró and Louise Métrich

*Tom Lantos*  
INSTITUTE

# **DO EVALUATIONS MATTER?**

*Workshop Publication*

*following the International workshop*

## **Evaluations of Public Policies Targeting the Roma - Methodologies and Methods**

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This publication is the result of a cooperation between the Tom Lantos Institute (TLI) and the National University of Public Service (NUPS), both based in Budapest. It addresses the controversial issue of the evaluation of public policies and programmes aiming at improving the situation of the Roma in Europe. In the past decade, the amount of reports on the *situation* of Roma in Europe has increased dramatically. Nevertheless, *policies* or *programmes* aiming at the Roma remain only marginally monitored and evaluated, although in recent years monitoring and evaluation have become an integral and crucial part of the set of instruments used in the field of “Roma integration” policies in Europe. Which are the methodologies and methods underlying these reports? What is their impact on the relevant political decision-makers? How do they influence the drafting and implementation of public policies targeting the Roma?

In its commitment to promoting effective participation of Roma in social, economic and cultural life and in public affairs while aiming to bridge the gap between research and policy, TLI gathered various actors from the academia, civil society, international organisations, European institutions and the Hungarian administration at an international workshop in Budapest in order to discuss the issue of evaluation of public policies targeting the Roma in Europe. The one-day workshop included several presentations about the currently existing methodologies and methods of monitoring and evaluation at national and European level. Participants critically discussed and reflected upon the actual impact of evaluations on policy-makers, and formulated recommendations in order to improve both monitoring and evaluation interventions *per se* as well as the whole monitoring and evaluation system of public policies targeting the Roma at the European level. Interestingly, throughout the workshop, the discussion broadened to include state programmes targeting the Roma in addition to public policies.

This publication comprises two parts. The first part is an attempt to reproduce the main questions formulated during the discussions in order to identify the most pressing challenges in the field of monitoring and evaluation. The second part includes the written contributions of three of the invited speakers. They address the monitoring system of

Roma integration policies in Hungary, the evaluation of public policies targeting the Roma in Spain, and the evaluation of programmes targeting Roma communities from the point of view of gender equality.

This publication also aims at providing a set of recommendations to all actors involved in monitoring and evaluation of public policies targeting the Roma.

**ANNA-MÁRIA BÍRÓ, President and CEO of the Tom Lantos Institute**

## **DISCLAIMER**

The views presented in this publication are respectively those of the workshop participants and the authors of the articles and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Tom Lantos Institute.

## EVALUATIONS OF PUBLIC POLICIES TARGETING THE ROMA: METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

### Introduction – On the Background of the Workshop

In the past decade, scholars, civil society organisations, governments, intergovernmental organisations as well as European institutions and agencies have produced an increasing number of reports on the situation of Roma in Europe.<sup>1</sup> For the most part, these reports assess the situation of Roma in the main four priority areas of the so-called ‘Roma integration’, including: education, employment, health, and housing, as initially defined by the Decade of Roma inclusion.<sup>2</sup> Further, a considerable number of these re-

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<sup>1</sup> Important reports and evaluations include, chronologically:

United Nations Development Programme, 2003. *Avoiding the dependency trap*. Bratislava: United Nations Development Programme.

United Nations Development Programme, 2006. *At risk*. Bratislava: United Nations Development Programme.

Open Society Foundations, 2010. *No Data – No Progress. Data Collection in Countries Participating in the Decade of Roma Inclusion*. New York: Open Society Institute.

The World Bank, 2012. *Policy advice on the integration of Roma in the Slovak Republic*. The World Bank.

Rostas, I., ed., 2012. *Ten years after, A history of school desegregation in Central and Eastern Europe*. Budapest and New York: Roma Education Fund and Central University Press.

European Union Fundamental Rights Agency and United Nations Development Programme, 2012. *The situation of Roma in 11 EU member states. Survey results at a glance*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

Commissioner for Human Rights, 2012. *Human rights of Roma and Travellers in Europe*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publishing.

European Commission, 2012. *What works for Roma inclusion in the EU. Policies and model approaches*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

Worth mentioning are also the Decade Progress Reports published yearly since 2010 by the governments taking part in the Decade of Roma Inclusion, available at: <http://www.romadecade.org/decade-documents-decade-progress-reports>.

<sup>2</sup> Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015, Terms of References:

ports focus on discrimination, racism, and, to a lesser extent, political participation. While these situation reports may contain assessments of *policies* targeting the Roma, often they are either related to ad hoc “best practices” or point out the negative side-effects of a specific measure. Overall, it can be said that reports focusing on the evaluations of public policies aiming at the Roma *per se* are few in number and are rather limited in their scope. Even more rarely are mainstream policies systematically assessed from the perspective of Roma. Further, the effects of *situation* reports and of their evaluations on policy makers remain a question to be answered. The great diversity of actors involved and the multiplicity of approaches and tools employed in assessment processes seem to be a factor of confusion, making it difficult to keep a clear overview of reports and to gauge their impact.

At the same time, in recent years monitoring and evaluation (hereinafter: M&E) have become an integral and crucial part of the set of instruments used in the field of “Roma integration” policies. Thus, the European Commission, in its 2011 communication on “An EU framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020” dedicates a specific section to “putting in place a robust monitoring system”, noticing that it is not yet possible to assess whether measures taken by Member States to tackle Roma exclusion and discrimination have given the expected results.

Against this background, the workshop addressed three important questions:

- Who are the evaluators of public policies targeting the Roma? What aspects of targeted public policies did they evaluate?
- What methodologies and methods did they use?
- What have been the effects and impacts of these evaluations?

With this workshop, the Tom Lantos Institute (TLI) and the National University of Public Service (NUPS) wanted to bring together scholars, activists, civil society actors, and public officials with expertise in the field of policy assessment and evaluation of policies

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[http://www.romadecade.org/cms/upload/file/9292\\_file1\\_terms-of-reference.pdf](http://www.romadecade.org/cms/upload/file/9292_file1_terms-of-reference.pdf)



targeted at Roma communities in Europe, in order to review and assess the approaches and methods employed by various actors engaging in evaluation, as well as the purposes and impact of evaluations.

Overall, the workshop raised more questions than gave answers. This workshop report is an attempt to reproduce the questions and dilemmas formulated during the discussions in order to identify the most pressing challenges in the field of M&E. It should be understood as a contribution to the debate surrounding M&E in the field of policies focusing on Roma in Europe, including recommendations.

### 1. The Actors of Monitoring and Evaluations

A great diversity of stakeholders has been involved in the evaluation of policies targeting the Roma. These include governmental actors, international organisations, European institutions and agencies, civil society organisations ranging from local, grassroots, to transnational NGOs, consulting firms and independent researchers. All these stakeholders are involved with different status and different roles in M&E processes. They may initiate, commission, fund, or carry out themselves monitoring and evaluation interventions. Because of their specific background, mission and agenda, their respective priorities vary considerably, which influences the ways they conceptualise and plan and/or carry out M&E. This poses several questions, which include:

- The dilemma between external versus internal evaluations: while external evaluations are often viewed as being more independent, professional, and credible, a participant pointed out that external evaluators often lack thorough background knowledge, which may result in the use of inappropriate indicators and the formulation of inaccurate assessments.
- The objectivity of evaluations: a participant observed that it can happen that unintentionally evaluators confirm pre-existing dispositions and convictions in their

evaluations. According to this participant, evaluations cannot be regarded as objective when they tend to have a biased focus on either the negative sides of programmes (e.g. when the evaluation focuses on state programmes) or the positive aspects (for instance, when the evaluation focuses on NGO work). The latter could be partly explained by the fact that NGOs find themselves under the constant pressure of satisfying the expectations of their donor.

- The actual involvement of the Roma and of Roma grassroots NGOs: participants agreed on the actual lack of involvement of Roma in M&E. M&E had become increasingly a field for experts and specialists, from which Roma themselves are too often excluded, for various reasons.

As a matter of fact, it was broadly agreed in the workshop that the question “who *evaluates*?” is much more complex than it first appears to be. It was suggested that this question should be re-formulated as “who *is involved* in M&E?” and it should be deconstructed into several sub-questions, as follows: Who initiates M&E? Who designs M&E? Who carries out M&E? Who funds M&E? And even: Who supervises the whole process?

### ***Ownership and readiness***

How can M&E become a true learning experience for organisations implementing public policies and programmes for Roma? Some participants underlined the importance of involving into this process the organisation whose work is being evaluated, thus creating a sense of *ownership* of the evaluation. At the same time, organisations should also be *ready* to undergo an M&E intervention. The feeling of being part of the process could be a key factor to ensure that an evaluation takes place in a cooperative manner and has an added value to the policy cycle, insofar as it becomes a genuine learning experience.

### ***Participation of Roma in the evaluation process***

More crucial and relevant appeared to be the question of the involvement of Roma in the M&E process, both as evaluators and as beneficiaries of the policies and programmes being assessed. While the involvement of Roma in all phases of the policy cycle (including M&E) seems to be currently a consensus in the leading narratives, the reality shows a different picture, in particular regarding M&E. Workshop participants

underlined and lamented the fact that Roma were extremely rarely involved in the design phase of evaluations and hardly participated in defining the evaluation indicators. In addition to the formal presence of Roma in the M&E process, a question is *how* Roma participate in it, i.e. what is their position and role within the M&E team. Are they mere observers formally consulted to share their opinion? Or are they fully involved as equals in the decision-making process? One participant insisted that it is important to make sure that Roma who participate in the M&E are skilled and have decision-making authority. It was pointed out that the word “participation” had been emptied of its true meaning and, all too often, was used to mask a rather unsatisfactory reality when the formal presence of some Roma in the room was interpreted as meaningful contribution.

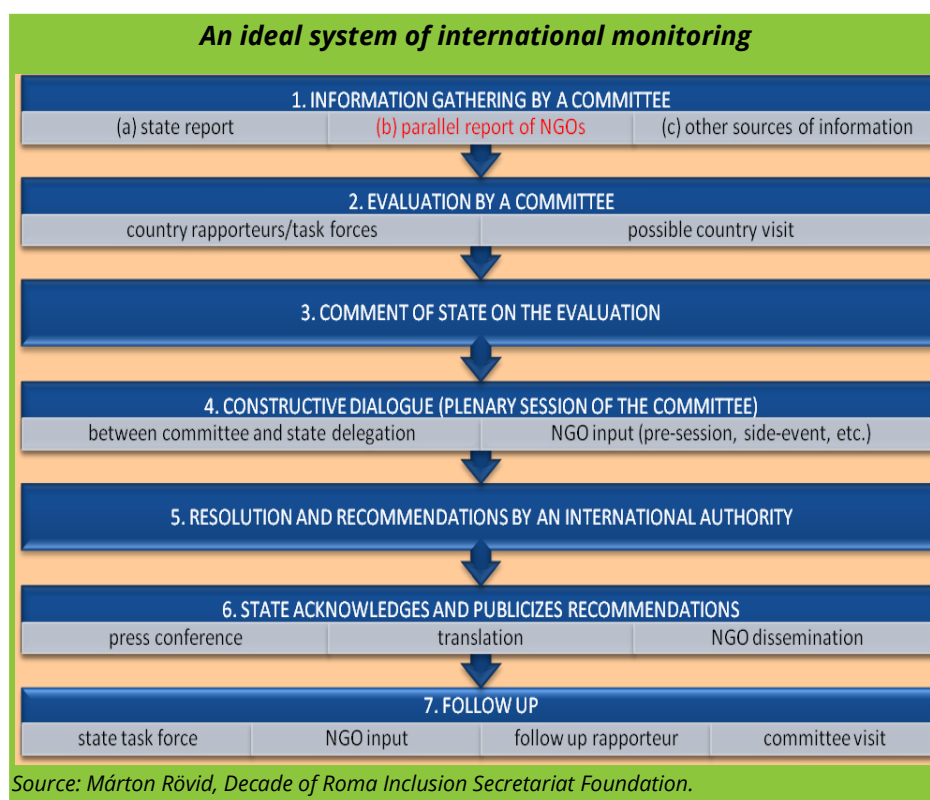
Further, one should not forget that the policies and state programmes assessed are meant to improve the living conditions of their beneficiaries, the Roma communities. Consequently, some participants argued that actors involved in the field of M&E do have an indirect responsibility on the living conditions of the communities that are targeted by the monitored programmes and policies. How to design and implement M&E interventions so that they become a tool of empowerment for Roma communities?

### ***Involvement of the so-called majority population***

Involving the Roma beneficiaries in the evaluation process is an obvious fact, at least for the participants of the workshop. But one participant recalled that the communication with the “majority population” during the evaluation process should not be neglected either. Indeed, most state programmes and policies in the field of social inclusion are aimed at poor, excluded, and disadvantaged populations regardless of their ethnicity. Further, non-Roma who are not beneficiaries of a specific social inclusion programme but live next to the Roma beneficiaries will be at least indirectly affected by that programme – or its effects – nonetheless. For instance, the perceptions on Roma may change positively and thus the relations between the Roma beneficiaries and the non-Roma “non-beneficiaries” may improve as well; but they may also change negatively, leading to the worsening of the relations between majority/minority communities and potentially stirring up conflicts. This risk should be taken into account throughout the policy cycle.

**Fostering a comprehensive monitoring system**

Civil society evaluations of public policies and programmes provide a different perspective than official governmental reports. In addition to this, civil society reports can have an additional, perhaps more subtle influence. In the view of one participant they can prove to be very useful in pushing governments to evaluate if they have not yet done so. Indeed, one year after the launching of the National Roma Integration Strategies (hereafter NRIS), most EU member states have not started monitoring their strategies and related policies, although M&E is an integral part of the EU framework and the NRIS. In this respect, the unique pilot project of civil society monitoring launched by the Decade Secretariat Foundation in 2012 was very much welcome. This project aimed at support-



ing civil society organisations in monitoring the NRIS and/or Decade Action plans in eight countries in Europe.<sup>3</sup> The Decade Secretariat Foundation published on its website a template for “civil society monitoring” in order to

encourage civil society coalitions to evaluate government policies targeting Roma as well as mainstream policies and their impact on the Roma.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> The eight countries were: Albania, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Macedonia, Romania, Slovakia, and Spain. Link to the reports: <http://romadecade.org/civilsocietymonitoring>.

<sup>4</sup>[http://romadecade.org/cms/upload/file/9270\\_file27\\_shadow-reporting-template-public.pdf](http://romadecade.org/cms/upload/file/9270_file27_shadow-reporting-template-public.pdf)

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Beyond this first and rather informal attempt of monitoring NRIS, the Decade Secretariat has been advocating for setting up a consistent and meaningful reporting system for Roma policies in the European Union, based on what currently exists in the Council of Europe and in the United Nations for the monitoring of various international norms such as the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities or the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Indeed, the absence of suitable and internationally recognised systems of monitoring in the field of Roma inclusion policies both at the EU level and in the respective EU member states was pointed out several times. If the European Commission is not in a position to force member states to monitor their policies or publish their evaluations, then the question of the initiative of monitoring, and in general of the culture of monitoring becomes even more crucial.

Which are the possibilities to boost the accountability and the critical self-assessment of EU member states?<sup>5</sup> A potential reporting system promoted by the Decade Secretariat would include: the obligation for EU member states and enlargement countries to report on an annual basis on the progress they make in implementing their NRIS and Decade Action Plans; and the creation of an evaluation committee that receives and reviews both official state reports and civil society counter-reports, engages in country visits and issues resolutions and recommendations. These recommendations should be formulated in such a way that they can feed into the drafting of country-specific recommendations in the European Semester process and, until 2016, the assessment of the fulfilment of relevant ex-ante conditionalities of EU funds.

In the view of participants, civil society monitoring and parallel or shadow reports raise important questions about the very nature and functioning of the civil society. First of all, how is “civil society” defined and which organisations belong to it? Is there a Roma civil society *per se*, and if so, how is it characterised? What is the position of Roma organ-

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<sup>5</sup> In addition to this, monitoring and evaluating systematically and within a strong system the NRIS and other policies that member states implement to address Roma inclusion would have the advantage to make apparent the synergies and above all the discrepancies between NRIS and Europe 2020.

isations, both towards other civil society organisations and towards their donors? What is the proportion of Roma organisations involved in M&E, and which role do they play, in particular within coalitions or consortia? In addition to questioning the composition and the independence of the civil society, participants also challenged the very existence and strength of civil society. In some countries, civil society organisations might not be strong enough to undertake evaluations and advocate for changes in Roma integration policies.

## 2. The Focus, Methodologies and Methods of Reports

### ***The focus of reports***

In an attempt at classifying existing evaluations according to their area of focus, several categories may be distinguished. Many general reports on *human rights* dedicate sections to the situation of the Roma. Similarly, studies on minority policies, integration policies, and social policies may also make reference to measures targeting Roma. This workshop centred on reports focusing exclusively on the Roma. Based on their geographic scope, they range from local through national to pan-European evaluations, including regional and comparative reports. From a substantive point of view, these reports cover a wide range of approaches including human rights, antidiscrimination, socio-economic integration or inclusion, cultural rights, and else. The methodological diversity of evaluations enables focus on different aspects of policies. At the same time, the multiplicity of methodologies and methods used make evaluations difficult to compare and to gauge their overall effect.

What do these reports assess, exactly? Do they focus on the design process of a policy or on its implementation? Do they evaluate the policy document itself (for instance the NRIS) or its effective implementation and effects? Do they evaluate the long-term impacts of the implemented policy at all? Or do they only assess the outputs versus the inputs (i.e. the cost-efficiency, or cost-benefit approach)? These questions bring us back

to the original issue: what does it mean to assess a policy? And when should the monitoring and evaluation process start?

Participants agreed on the importance of differentiating between the various levels and

**Levels of monitoring of Roma integration policies according to the European Commission:**

- Roma inclusion (measuring the gap between Roma and non-Roma)
- Implementation of the National Roma Integration Strategies
- Implementation of EU programmes

aspects of assessments, since they all have different objectives and, hence, focus on different issues, good practices and shortcomings. Yet not all participants agreed on what exactly should be at the forefront of evaluations. While some believe that the assessment of the

outputs, outcomes, or impacts of policies is of central importance, others argue strongly that the policy formulation process (research, planning, design, implementation) should be assessed as well, as it may impact on the results of the policy.

While the answers to the question “What to monitor and evaluate?” largely depend on the level chosen (micro, meso, or macro), certainly the monitoring and evaluating culture *across all levels* of policy implementation structures has been missing, one participant lamented.

### **Indicators**

Each of the levels of monitoring mentioned above requires different types of indicators, and different data sources. Defining indicators is a sensitive part of the M&E process, since they will define the direction of the assessment. How and by whom are these indicators defined? For instance, the EU 2020 indicators were cited by a participant as an example of indicators which enable a comparison across countries. Yet the evaluation of policies targeted specifically at the Roma need to be based on indicators designed with the input of Roma civil society actors and Roma

**The United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights’ three levels of indicators:**

- Structures: legislation
- Processes: policies, programmes
- Outcomes: results on the ground

Source: Sheena Keller, European Union Fundamental Rights Agency

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beneficiaries since they are the ones who know best what needs to be measured for optimising impact. This was not the case for the 2020 indicators.

Examples were also given to show that sometimes indicators might cast light upon a very limited part of the whole picture. For instance, a participant pointed out that while the education of Roma is commonly evaluated, no attention is paid to the knowledge of Roma students. This approach does not take into account the knowledge and skills many Roma have since this is often more “informal” and does not fit readily into what is considered as “knowledge” resulting from formal education in schools. Hence many Roma are labelled as uneducated because of their lack of formal education, while their informal skills and knowledge are overlooked. At the same time, measuring school attendance and level of graduation does not say anything about the impact of schooling on the community, or on the employability of these students, for instance.

A major issue that M&E often – intentionally or not – overlook is the gender perspective. In fact, as a participant lamented, evaluations often lack a gender perspective, either because of the chosen methodology that is purposefully gender-blind, or because of the way the evaluation is carried out, putting *de facto* women in the shadow. At the same time, some reports focus exclusively on the situation of Romani women. Yet, precisely because of this narrower and more specific focus, these assessments face the risk of reaching out to a much smaller audience normally specialising in gender issues. This segregation of the gender perspective within the field of M&E should be tackled and the gender perspective should be systematically integrated into the indicators for the monitoring and evaluation of Roma inclusion policies. In order to have more accurate M&E reports, one participant noted that there are cases when it is important to challenge the underlying assumptions informing the evaluation. For instance, it is often assumed as ‘common sense’ that inclusive education damages the education of non-Roma pupils. But does it really? Do non-Roma children indeed perform worse as a result of the inclusion of Roma children in their classes?

Problems related to the difference in the difference of the time-scale of policies were also pointed out. Evaluating policy results and impacts are long-run processes, yet policies



are often short-lived. At the same time, some participants were sceptical about evaluating the NRIS one year after their adoption, while their implementation had not yet started. Others pointed out that the failure of member states to implement their NRIS was actually a negative result revealed by the monitoring of the NRIS.

### **Data collection**

Data collection has long been a complex and sensitive issue, mainly because of the high sensitivity concerning ethnic statistics in Europe. States have been reluctant to gather socio-economic data on their Roma populations. As a matter of consequence, until recently, no data was available which could serve as a baseline to assess the situation of Roma and the effects of Roma inclusion policies in Europe, participants noted. The biggest effort and initiative to systematically collect data on the situation of Roma was made by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) which carried out a large scale survey on the living conditions of Roma throughout Europe.<sup>6</sup>

But how to make the best use of surveys and barometers? While they should not be mistaken for monitoring and evaluation results, they can be central tools in the assessment of state policies and programmes. They should be seen as an essential baseline that provides a frame of reference against which the planned level of achievement, the performance or actual achievement can be measured at the end of the monitoring period. As a matter of fact, the baseline can be regarded as a mark of the seriousness with which M&E is treated, according to one participant. At the same time, a participant warned that M&E is over-reliant on surveys that are often designed internally, and thus present the risk of being detached from standard statistical instruments. This gap between enthusiasm-driven amateurism of civil society monitoring and professional evaluations could be reduced with the involvement of statisticians as equal partners of civil society actors. This would require a strict division of areas of competence. The objective would be to make the M&E of Roma inclusion policies compatible with the

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<sup>6</sup> United Nations Development Programme, 2003. *Avoiding the dependency trap*. Bratislava: United Nations Development Programme.

already existing statistical instruments whenever possible. One participant pointed out that much data coming from outside the field of “Roma inclusion” *stricto sensu* may be potentially used to monitor the situation of Roma in Europe.<sup>7</sup>

### 3. The Effects and Impact of Evaluations

What are the purposes of evaluating and reporting? Why is it in the interest of policy-makers to welcome external reports, and how can they make good use of them? Participants highlighted the learning and supportive value of monitoring: monitoring is not merely a way to criticise, but to help and draw lessons for further policies or programmes. Reporting should not be an end in itself, a task that is dealt with quickly to satisfy donors or international pressure. Rather, M&E interventions should be seen as a useful instrument to improve policies, enabling policy-makers to learn lessons from past experiences, understand which the good practices are and why, and to what extent these can be adapted somewhere else. Evaluation has a crucial role to detect where policies have failed, one participant insisted. Two issues are at stake here. First of all, how do we know that a specific social change can be *attributed* to a specific policy (or set of policies), or that a specific policy *contributed* to a social change? Besides, while success often has many parents, failure is an orphan. In reality, both the success of a policy and its failure are aggregates of successes and failures of its components (strategies, programmes and measures).

#### ***M&E and communication***

In addition to assessing what works and what does not, evaluations may also be a tool for accountability, including the provision of information to the public. Further, evalua-

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<sup>7</sup> For instance from the data collected in for the monitoring of the implementation of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, or from the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) studies.

tion may be a means of promoting dialogue, and improving cooperation between various stakeholders through mutual sharing of experiences.<sup>8</sup> Besides critically assessing policies and suggesting recommendations, reports could be a valuable tool for further cooperation, as well as a real medium to display information to the public, including the beneficiaries of the policies in question on the one hand, and tax-payers on the other hand. Evaluation and monitoring reports usually target a very small, specific, expert audience. How are the results of these assessments treated by the media and presented to the society?

Some workshop participants were critical about the lack of transparency and publicity of official M&E interventions: data and results of official reports are not always made available to the public. In particular, most often there is no clear public information on the extent to which the funds that are supposed to be allocated to Roma inclusion policies do in fact reach the Roma communities. This is problematic since it enables ill-intentioned politicians or media to state that *big amounts of tax-payers money are spent on Roma in vain* or that *Roma inclusion costs a lot yet has little result*. Such uncritical generalisations are dangerous and manipulative. They are not supported by evidence and are usually false. However, they are powerful in their simplicity and can fuel racist, anti-Roma rhetoric and acts.

Using mainstream media to communicate about the (cost-)effectiveness of Roma inclusion policies is highly sensitive and complex. While it is necessary to address issues of corruption and the misuse of EU and other public funds in the field of Roma inclusion programmes, this should be done accurately and carefully to avoid possible counter-productive effects. A participant emphasised that it is hardly possible to know the exact amount of EU funds spent on Roma inclusion programmes since there is no Roma inclusion programme *stricto sensu*. The numbers provided are about social inclusion programmes in general, which *include* but are *not only* about measures targeting Roma. Hence the estimates presented to the public are usually much higher than the real amount *effectively spent* on Roma programmes and *actually reaching* Roma communities.

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<sup>8</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development Development Assistance Committee, 1991. *DAC Principles for Evaluation of Development Assistance*. Paris: OECD.

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Roma beneficiaries being among the most vulnerable, it is very likely that funds reach them to a lesser extent than they reach other disadvantaged groups, a participant observed. This certainly applies also to public policies in member states whose social inclusion policies remain untargeted. One participant emphasised that it was important to challenge the rhetoric of the “zero-sum game”, according to which if the Roma benefit from a policy, the non-Roma will lose from it.

### 4. Recommendations

What is the actual impact of evaluations on policy-makers and policies? It seems that there is a need for meta-evaluations to ensure that reporting and evaluation make a difference and have a concrete, positive impact on political decision-makers and their policies, beneficiaries, and the society at large. Many recommendations were formulated throughout the presentations and the discussions that followed. A summary of the most frequently raised recommendations is provided in the following.

#### **1- Ensure the effective and meaningful participation of the Roma in all phases of the M&E process:**

- Involve Roma researchers, evaluators, civil society actors in the planning, design and implementation of M&E;
- Consult final beneficiaries of policies and programmes in a meaningful way.

#### **2- Develop a comprehensive and strong system of M&E at EU level that includes a.o. a common methodology, indicators and methods.**

A meaningful European M&E system should include:

- The obligation for EU member states and enlargement countries to report on an annual basis on the progress they make;
- The periodical evaluation/revision of NRIS;
- The creation of an evaluation committee that receives and reviews both official state reports as well as civil society reports, organises country visits, drafts resolutions and formulates recommendations;
- Annual discussions and debates on reports in Parliaments, both at national and European level. This could help finding agreements on short and medium term priorities for the member states regarding their inclusion policies.

### 3- Improve the coordination and cooperation:

- between all actors of M&E,
- between EU member states and the European Commission,
- And among EU member states.

### 4- Mainstream the gender perspective:

- The methodology and methods of monitoring and evaluation, including the design of indicators should systematically take into account the gender perspective.
- The composition of the M&E teams should reflect the importance of the gender perspective: female evaluators of Roma origins and experts in gender issues should be part of M&E teams.
- The experiences and the voices of Romani women beneficiaries should be systematically taken into account when a public policy or programme is monitored and evaluated.

### 5- M&E should be treated seriously and methods should be improved:

- Whenever possible the qualitative and quantitative methods most often used by civil society actors should be mixed with statistics.
- The quality of indicators should be improved.
- Target groups and stakeholders should be defined more precisely: for instance the category “Roma” is meaningless for public policies, and it is also far too general. Similarly, concepts such as participation, empowerment, inclusion, should be defined more precisely, while implementation, output, outcome, and impact should be differentiated.
- In case of policies, define clear-cut benchmarks, milestones, target-performance to be measured.
- The target of the evaluation should be clearly defined and a territorial approach is recommended. Qualitative research is crucial for the evaluation of local actions.

CSABA ANDOR<sup>9</sup>

## REVIEWING THE MONITORING OF POLICIES TARGETING THE ROMA IN HUNGARY

### Abstract

*The article discusses the professional, administrative, and political aspects of monitoring and evaluating the National Social Inclusion Strategy, which is the Hungarian government's strategy that focuses on the Roma. The paper defines the terms monitoring and evaluation, describes the components of the monitoring system, and identifies the monitoring and evaluating bodies. The author outlines the shortcomings of the methodologies and methods, and questions the accountability of different evaluation methods. The paper concludes with a set of policy recommendations to improve the current practice, and lists the literature available on monitoring and evaluation.*

*Keywords: monitoring, methodologies, Roma, Hungary*

### Introduction

The possibility of independent monitoring and evaluation of policies is always a question. On the one hand it is not always easy to identify the scope and the real target of a policy, and written policies are not the only means a government can use in order to influence progress in a certain field. Further, methodologies of monitoring and evaluation – although may well be based scientifically – quite naturally often serve political goals too. The appropriate methodology may not necessarily be used, or its use may be restricted to a few top level political decision makers.

These statements are especially true in the case of a policy dealing with a topic of particular political interest such as the inclusion of the Roma. This article tries to reveal the

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## PART 2: SPEAKER'S CONTRIBUTIONS

professional, administrative, and political aspects of monitoring and evaluating the National Social Inclusion Strategy (hereafter: NSIS), which is the Hungarian government's strategy that focuses on the Roma. It must be acknowledged that the NSIS and its current Action Plan (2012-14) do not contain all public policies and actions influencing the situation of the Roma, but they are the only strategic documents with a specific Roma focus. Although the analysis of related policies is also important, due to space restrictions and a limited expertise this article will focus on the NSIS only.

It is important to define the two key terms: monitoring and evaluation. In this paper *monitoring* means the process of gathering quantitative data and qualitative information about projects, programmes, policies, or strategies, to be able to provide stakeholders (local and national leaders, managers, participants, civil interest organisations, the public, the media, etc.) with the sufficient amount of quality information about their progress. *Evaluations* contain general statements made on the basis of information accumulated through monitoring, combined with the knowledge about the wider socio-economic situation. The two activities should be done separately for the following reasons:

- To avoid monitoring to be biased by evaluation outcomes which are already known;
- To avoid that monitoring influences the evaluation.

### Monitoring the NSIS

The monitoring system of the NSIS contains two main elements. One is the systematic monitoring of programmes that was started in late 2012 and continued in 2013. Its results were included in the annual report about the implementation of the NSIS. The methodology of monitoring the programmes was developed with professional guidance from the international consulting firm KPMG. The NSIS was reviewed in the light of all government strategies (altogether about 170), and a programme monitoring methodology was developed, structured according to the general and specific goals of the



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strategy. Unified programme data sheets and presentation samples were created to ease the understanding of the achievement of the goals and to summarise the current status of the implementation of programmes.

The other element of the monitoring system is the Social Inclusion Indicator System (SIIS). The SIIS provides selected indicators of the social environment according to NSIS goals. The 2013 Government Report on the Implementation of the NSIS and its Action Plan (2012-14, started in early 2012) is based on the information derived from the SIIS, developed by the independent Social Research Institute Társadalomkutatási Intézet (TÁRKI), and the general and specific statistics gathered by the Central Statistical Office. The 2013 Government Report illustrates the overall situation of the society with specific focus on the Roma. The Report indirectly attributes improvement in some areas to the programmes of the NSIS Action Plan 2012-14.

### Evaluating and Monitoring Bodies

#### ***Evaluation***

The main evaluating bodies of Roma policies in Hungary are research institutions and independent human rights organisations. Until recently the National Development Agency commissioned evaluations of programmes that included Roma programmes as well. The Secretariat for Social Inclusion is also a regular customer of independent evaluations as they provide additional sources of information to its work. The Decade of Roma Inclusion Secretariat Foundation coordinated the preparation of the Civil Society Monitoring Report on the Implementation of the National Roma Integration Strategy and Decade Action Plan in 2012 in Hungary. Although it is called a monitoring report, it also includes an evaluation.

Nevertheless, in Hungary only a few stakeholders have been committed to carry out impact assessments and take their results into account, for several reasons. On one hand project managers, project owners and institutional leaders want to show that their action has an impact: further funding, professional and political respect and promotion are

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at stake. On the other hand, members of the political opposition may prefer to see that programmes do not reach their targets and/or have adverse or inadequate impacts. Although these conclusions are strong arguments that may prove to be powerful and effective in political life, their scientific validation is quite difficult.

Another reason that accounts for the lack of evaluations is the difficulty to attribute the success of an action: actual beneficiaries of, or participants in projects are often different from non-beneficiaries (for example because they are selected that way) or because the initial individual analyses of the situation of the project participants are biased. Hence it does not make sense to compare these two groups to find out what the success of a programme can be attributed to. Moreover, programmes are implemented in specific areas, at a specific moment and for a specific reason. In reality it might be that volunteers chosen for a programme are more motivated or better informed than their counterparts who do not take part in that programme. Nevertheless this problem can be overcome using international methodologies such as Randomised Evaluation of J-PAL, but these are costly.

### ***Monitoring***

Monitoring of the policies is conducted by several agents. NSIS Action Plan programmes are monitored by the Secretariat for Social Inclusion based on information gathered from responsible sectorial government departments. In the cases of projects or programmes, the persons implementing them are usually also the ones who gather data. Monitoring is also aided by the monitoring information systems of the former National Development Agency (in the case of EU-programmes) and by the monitoring information systems of the responsible sectorial ministries, as well as by using new methods (poverty map and segregation map, both with the help of World Bank expertise).

### Methodologies and Methods

In the case of individual projects (both domestic and EU-funded) that have a focus on developing human capital, only self-monitoring is expected usually without a separate budget allocated for it.<sup>10</sup> Although administration of attendance and other forms of own data collection are expected, these are not necessarily reliable, yet their validity is seldom questioned. Indicators usually include programme outputs and outcomes, but do not really measure improvements in the situation of beneficiaries. Impact indicators are rarely used. Comprehensive participatory evaluations are seldom produced, and when they occur they are sometimes biased due to the following reasons:

- only participants are asked without using a control group,
- methodology of evaluation is rarely questioned, and
- Alternative methods are not used.

Generally the methodologies of reaching the targets of a certain project or a policy are rarely discussed, and real alternatives are not considered.

In the case of programmes aiming to achieve certain policy goals, evaluations are ordered by the respective managing authorities either through an open call or an invitation to tender. These evaluations are usually done by independent professionals and can be regarded as systematic and appropriate considering their methodology (the depth of which, of course, depends on the budget). Nevertheless evaluations of certain sectorial programmes are not compared to other sectors thus making it difficult to evaluate how efficiently funds are allocated and used. Although there is existing tool to do so – for example net present value (NPV), internal rate of return (IRR) and others – unfortunately they are not broadly used for comparing projects and actions in different sectors due to the lack of data or reliable estimates.

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<sup>10</sup> Projects investing in infrastructure are monitored through regular official documents – accounts, building permits, etc.

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Another general problem in the case of situation analysis of social questions affecting the Roma population is that there is no research about the necessary amount of actions (projects) and most appropriate methodologies to make the expected impact. Of course, this question can also be raised in the case of other areas subject to social policies. Action planners are often biased or they think that problems can be solved in one way only. There are no well-founded decisions on the model of change underlying a policy, on the eligibility criteria for priority projects and their appraisal, or on the amount of funds to be allocated for certain policy goals. Other open questions are the definition of potential project beneficiaries, project appraisal criteria and expectations of project activities and methodology. It is also a problem that so-called 'innovative' projects often do not contain real innovation, or that appraisal criteria make it impossible for innovative ideas to succeed. Impact indicators are very seldom used as social impacts might appear only on a longer term that is not within the scope of the project.

Another difficulty is the lack of transparency of interests. Usually the attitude of ownership (e.g. an inherent interest to achieve goals) is lacking on the side of stakeholders such as the project owner, the programme managing authority or even decision makers responsible for the attainment of policy targets.

### Effects and Impacts of Evaluations, Accountability

The assessment of evaluations depends on their methodology and on the expectations of the donor. Effects and impacts of evaluations usually depend on the public or private bodies commissioning them and whether or not these evaluations are public. As the Roma issue is highly sensitive, much attention is paid to avoid making ideological statements.

Reactions to evaluations follow expected patterns. Government agents turn attention to positive or relatively favourable statements while other stakeholders tend to focus more on the negative. Representatives of the Roma are also divided in their opinions for simi-

lar reasons. As there are several accepted and respected methodologies employed in evaluations, different evaluations of the same policies can be interpreted differently.

### Policy Recommendations

Several recommendations can be derived from current experience with the monitoring and evaluation of NSIS:

- Introduce a systematic and planned, tailor-made monitoring of all programmes (input, result and outcome indicators, as well as the description of the current situation) implemented by the government and the gathering of general information about the relevant community the programme would like to address; monitoring should be introduced as a general dimension into all actions concerning the Roma;
- Support relevant and timely basic research on the situation of NSIS target groups;
- Make the independent evaluations of NSIS programmes compulsory;
- Methodological guidelines should be developed about administration and the preferred indicators to help the independent and the self-monitoring of the progress of individual projects; methods and indicators should not encourage bias to comply with managing authorities' interests.
- Encourage independent capacity building to help the appraisal of projects and to be able to effectively help implementation besides ongoing monitoring;
- Enhance cooperation with international partners to find answers to specifically Roma-related questions in monitoring and evaluation;
- Results and impacts of Roma policies should also be compared to those of other policies;
- Monitoring and evaluation should also be applied to programmes that are not included directly in the Action Plan of the NSIS but have nonetheless an impact on the situation of Roma.

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**BÁLINT ÁBEL BEREMÉNYI<sup>11</sup>****A STEP FORWARD IN THE EVALUATION OF PUBLIC POLICIES  
TARGETING THE ROMA IN SPAIN***Abstract*

*Reflecting on fundamental problems in Roma programme evaluations, this paper discusses different types of evaluation of Roma policies, through examples from Catalonia. Three relevant evaluation reports are presented, which elaborate on three categories of evaluations with their respective shortcomings and strengths. The first one is an administrative report, which does not focus on beneficiaries and objectives; the second is a formative evaluation conducted by evaluators with strong links to the designers and implementers of the programme, hence it can be used to justify the objectives of the programme; and the third one is a “shadow report” based on the findings of a pro-Roma organisation to complement the official report on the policy in question, however, it does not prove independent enough and does not question the correlation between public policies targeting the Roma and the current situation of the Roma population. These evaluation reports are contrasted with a participative and ethnographically informed evaluation project, which the author considers a step forward in the improvement of evaluation methodology. This project is carried out with the cooperation of a Roma federation and a university research group, using mixed methods for data collection, followed by evaluators elaborating three overlapping dimensions of analysis and triangulating outcomes. The paper concludes with lessons drawn from this latter evaluation project, and emphasises the importance of defining the target group, encouraging Roma participation in the evaluation processes, and utilising evaluation as a tool for advocacy.*

*Keywords: evaluation, methodology, Roma participation*

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### Introduction

There is an increasing pressure on public institutions to be held accountable to citizens, in explicit and transparent ways as a necessary condition of good, citizen-focused governance (Kusek, Rist 2004:11). This is not only about a turn towards establishing standardised monitoring and evaluation procedures in public administration but, also, it means a growing awareness about the better adjustment of objectives and evaluation methodologies. Increasingly, the traditional “administrative-report-like”, operational evaluations have become objects of criticism. Impact-evaluations (Khandker, Koolwal et al. 2010) to be explicitly utilised for policy improvement are in the best interest of any responsible government that needs to increase effectiveness and accountability (Patton 2008).

The imperative of democratic governance of European states does not only require the strengthening of openness, transparency, accountability and effectiveness based on common European guidelines (European Commission 2001), but also an active **civic participation** “from conception to implementation” (European Commission 2001) of policies. Correspondingly, there have been some visible changes in the extent to which civil society, and notably, the target groups of the policies actively participate in the monitoring and evaluation of those policies. **Public policies targeting the Roma populations** and their evaluations stem from this general European trend, as, putatively, these policies grow out of coherent governmental programmes and from ideologically-theoretically sustained **change theories**.

The debate on the “European Roma Question” (Kovats 2002) or “Roma issue” (Kóczé, Rövid 2012), that is, the “politicization of ‘Roma’ people and their circumstances” (Kovats 2002) has gradually been channelled into a common European Roma Strategy. The *Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies* (European Commission 2011) was designed with the previously mentioned EU standards for democratic governance in mind. In addition to active civic participation, another emphatic aspect of the new national strategies on Roma inclusion has been the **measurability of its results**. Both politicians and “(pro-)Roma civil society” activists echoed the need to build up and apply a strong

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set of monitoring and evaluation (hereafter: M&E) instruments. A key figure in the elaboration of the EU Framework, MP Lívía Járóka, as early as in February 2011 called for an annual reporting system “to support and evaluate the efficiency and the tangible results of the programmes rather than purely checking that projects in receipt of grants have met the procedural formalities, and calls for effective monitoring of the use of funds so that the financial resources genuinely end up improving the living conditions” (Járóka 2011a). Furthermore MP Járóka put an emphasis on the “participatory monitoring evaluation”, an aspect that was missing from the national and regional Roma programmes, projects or policies up to that point. In the same line, an EC Report released in April 2011 underlines that national strategies “should also set out the necessary pre-conditions for an effective and result-oriented support, including **through better evaluation [...] a systematic evaluation and reinforced monitoring.**” (European Commission 2011) On the part of the civil society, a good example is Open Society Foundations’ public tender aiming “to **monitor** and advocate effectively for the preparation or improvement of comprehensive national strategies”.<sup>12</sup> Finally, it should be mentioned that official Progress Reports of 2012 on the National Roma Integration Strategies (NRIS) were contrasted with and contested by alternative information through “Civil Society Monitoring Reports” promoted and financed by the Decade of Roma Inclusion Secretariat and Open Society Foundations, which is a clear sign of a generalised intent to pluralise policy evaluation.

In this brief paper, we will argue that despite repeated calls for improvement, the root causes of fundamental problems in Roma programme evaluations have not yet been addressed in Spain. I will present **three relevant evaluation reports** highlighting their weaknesses together with some of their strengths. Then, I will contrast these evaluation reports with the **participative and ethnographically informed evaluation project** (FAGiC, EMIGRA 2012) of the Comprehensive Plan for the Roma Population in Catalonia<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Open Society Roma Initiatives' call for proposals: “Advocating comprehensive Roma integration strategies and mechanisms in EU member states”, June 2011.

<sup>13</sup> The Comprehensive Plan for the Roma Population in Catalonia has had two editions: 2005-2008; 2009-2013.

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(hereafter: Catalan Roma Plan), as one step forward in the improvement of evaluation methodology. This evaluation project stemmed from the real concerns of grassroots Roma civil society organisations and it was elaborated through the strategic cooperation of a Roma federation and a university research group. Finally, I will reflect on some critical aspects of the evaluation of Roma-targeted policies.

### 1. Who Evaluates Public Policies Targeting the Roma in Spain?

Although in Spain the **interest in programme evaluations** is growing (Pazos, Zapico-Goñi 2002), it is still very unusual to find thoroughly developed, **impact evaluations**, that is, evaluations that aim to assess the “mechanisms by which beneficiaries are responding to the interventions” (Khandker, Koolwal et al. 2010:3) rather than just centring on how programmes are implemented. Evaluations on Roma policies can be grouped in three categories. In the first category, accountability is far too often limited to the **internal operational assessment** elaborated **by public administration staff**. A second category of reports produced in Spain are those commissioned by the executive or advisory organs of the targeted Roma programmes or plans financed through public resources. The third type consists of evaluation reports or case-study reports elaborated on demand or through public tenders launched by international civil society organisations, such as Decade Watch Reports; Civil Society Monitoring Reports; or the Open Society Foundations EU Framework Advocacy Grant 2011. In the following I will describe a case for each category.

#### ***Administrative report or policy evaluation?***

The first case we have chosen is the evaluation elaborated on the **Roma Development Programme** of Spain (Ministerio de Sanidad y Servicios Sociales 2008) by the responsible division of the Ministry of Health and Social Services. The report gives a detailed description of the financial investment made in the framework of the Programme. Further, it names the main participating public and private organisations and disaggregates

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final project-users by sex and age, though not by particular projects. Financial allocation and technical variables appear to be exhaustive at a high level of aggregation both on the input and output sides. Nevertheless, one cannot figure out *who* were the beneficiaries and the main stakeholders; what was actually done for them; *what were* the objectives of the projects and to what extent these objectives have been *fulfilled*. In short, this administrative report does not help us find out how public investments make a difference in the present situation of the Roma population of Spain, and what these differences are. In addition to fundamental methodological weaknesses, this particular report relies solely on data delivered by implementing organisations, aggregated without any triangulation techniques. The fact that Spain's central Roma programme was so weakly and superficially assessed brings up the question of what the very use of this operational, or rather "input-output", evaluation was. As a matter of fact, the only really significant information it communicates is that Spain spends a certain amount of money on the Roma that may increase or decrease by consecutive budget allocations.

### ***Evaluation to justify objectives***

The **second category** is well illustrated by the evaluation of the Catalan Roma Plan (Sordé, Siles 2009). As this **formative evaluation** was made during the implementation phase it had the explicit goal to improve performance. As for its methodological approach, it claimed to follow a "critical communicative orientation, in the sense, that it counted on the participation of Roma individuals from the design to the interpretation of the data" (Sordé, Siles 2009:3). It targeted five key aspects related to the original objectives of the Catalan Roma Plan: efficiency; operation of consultative and executive organs and structure; participation; cross-cutting dimensions and gender perspective. It applied a mixed methodology with a qualitative profile. Undoubtedly, the report is one of the first evaluations on a particular Roma policy that contrasts observed facts with initial objectives and that analyses underlying principles and not only quantitative data. Though we cannot enter into the analysis of the methodological pitfalls of the report, we can highlight some of its weaknesses. These include: the lack of Roma participation in the evaluation team; a strong focus on those (few Roma individuals) who actively partic-

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ipated in the planning and implementation of the policy and the complete invisibility of the wider target population (those not engaged in civic and political participation); over-emphasis of institutional cooperation at a governmental level and masking the lack of local strategic partnerships; confusion between project output and project impact; projection of a continued linear progress without questioning aspects of sustainability. The most vulnerable point of the evaluation, however, is found in the selection of the evaluators and their hidden ideological orientation and interests. Evaluators had strong professional links to those in charge of the design and the execution of the Catalan Roma Plan. Hence, one may suspect that the underlying purpose of the evaluation was to justify the original objectives and means. As such, it cannot fulfil its real function of revealing malfunctioning dynamics and setting critical recommendations for improvements. Highlighting one's own value-commitment and interests in an explicit way is a legitimate way of using evaluation as an advocacy tool (Greene 2012, Greene 1997). Nevertheless, the lack of transparency in the selection of evaluators may be problematic as it challenges the legitimacy and usefulness of ultimate findings.

### ***Civil society or government agency?***

Within the third category the most recent Spanish Civil Society Monitoring Report (Fundación Secretariado Gitano, Grupo Alter et al. 2013) provides us a useful lesson. The “shadow report” aimed at giving critical grassroots insights about the implementation of the NRIS and the ‘Roma Decade’-related programmes. The largest Spanish pro-Roma NGO chosen to lead the reporting consortium has a privileged access to quantitative data produced on the Spanish Roma, mainly because many representative surveys and wide-scale studies were conducted by them. Similarly, this NGO is well positioned in high level advisory and decision making bodies. Also its country-wide office network covers almost all Spanish territory. All these elements favour the elaboration of the “shadow report”. Furthermore, young Roma women and men were involved in the data collection for the report, also through other members of the consortium. These strengths, however, turned into weaknesses inasmuch as the pro-Roma organisation in question not only disposes of the largest public budget among all (pro-)Roma organisations in Spain but

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its projects are also considered the most significant ones in the framework of the Spanish NRIS. This NGO has a considerable influence on decision-makers related to social policies. Further, its presence at European institutions, organisations and platforms is decisive in communicating any information on Spanish Roma. This privileged status and the ensuing conflict of interest was not made explicit in the final report, hence, the consortium could not fulfil the strategic objective of a truly alternative “shadow report” that challenges and complements the official country report with independent grassroots evaluation. Further, a significant methodological shortcoming of the report is that it does not demonstrate either positive or negative *correlation* between public policies targeted at Roma and the current situation of the Spanish Roma population. It simply assumes that changes can be attributed to policies, rather than more complex socio-economic conjunctures. As a matter of fact, this missed point should have been central to discussions in the report.

### ***Participative evaluation responding to grassroots concerns***

The evaluation project (FAGiC, EMIGRA 2012)<sup>14</sup> that is reviewed in this section can be set against the previously mentioned practices in several aspects. First of all, it makes explicit the values it advocates for. Further, it explicitly addresses underlying ethical questions and dilemmas that stem from conflicts of interests. The study broadens the scope of the target population including varied groups of stakeholders, trying to show inner diversity of apparently compact groups, an effort that requires an ethnographically informed knowledge. Its objective coincides with one of the aforementioned studies: it aims to assess the first six years of the “Comprehensive Plan for the Roma People in Catalonia”. It focuses on its planning, implementation and results, in a wide sense, and applies a mixed methodology. The project stems from a general dissatisfaction and an overall lack of information among Spanish Roma associations regarding the Roma Plan's outcomes and impacts and an explicit desire of many Roma individuals to better understand the functioning of Roma-targeted public policies. Catalonia's largest Roma federation

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<sup>14</sup>The evaluation report was authored by B.Á. Bereményi (EMIGRA, UAB) and A. Mirga (FAGiC – Federation of Roma Associations in Catalonia).

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(FAGiC) invited the university-based research group, EMIGRA-UAB to conduct a cooperative evaluation project. In the following we discuss some of the distinctive features of this project, focusing first on the project's stated objectives followed by the methodological concerns and, finally, the most important findings and implications.

### 2. Participative Evaluation on Design, Implementation and Impact

The main **purpose** of the evaluation project was to gain a complete view of the Roma Plan as a complex, contextualised process, involving multiple stakeholders, bearing in mind its changing shape and dynamics over time. A strong cooperation among Roma civil society activists and experts with non-Roma researchers was an explicit objective of the project and a continuous challenge, obliging participants to negotiate methods of data collection and analysis as well as harmonising ethnographic knowledge with the aims of grassroots activists. Some of these debates are made explicit in the evaluation report. One of the initial dilemmas was about the extent to which the NGO/Researcher partnership could be regarded as an external evaluation, since the co-coordinating Roma federation had been directly involved in the Roma Plan as a beneficiary, service-provider and as advisor /decision-maker. Due to this manifold involvement of the Roma Federation in the project, the evaluators decided on utilising "participatory evaluation" (Whitmore 1998) in which "representatives of agencies and stakeholders (including beneficiaries) work together in designing, carrying out and interpreting an evaluation" (Kusek, Rist 2004). Another debated point between activists and researchers that was made explicit in the evaluation report, was about the weaknesses of the formal representation structures of the "Roma people" in Catalonia as well as about the effectiveness of the ritualised, but limitedly effective, participation of the Roma leaders in the Catalan Plan.

The mixed methodology of data collection consisted of a wide range of techniques, such as interviews, participant observation, focus groups, surveys, archives gathering, altogether reaching out to more than 260 individuals. Evaluators elaborated three overlapping dimensions of analysis. Firstly, they concentrated attention on specific pro-



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jects or sets of projects within the Catalan Roma Plan. Second, they focused on the structures and operations in the framework of the Departments of the Catalan Government involved in the Plan. Finally, they triangulated the particular local outcomes of the Roma Plan in different municipalities. Adding two more relevant elements (nationality and age) to *The 10 Common Basic Principles on Roma Inclusion* proposed by the *European Platform for Roma Inclusion*, the analysis has traced all 12 traversal aspects in the studied dimensions.

The evaluation project had to face several unexpected challenges when reviewing the design of the Roma Plan. These challenges modified the usual process of the evaluation in several ways, such as: the general goals of the Roma Plan were not broken down into more specific objectives; no baselines and benchmarks were marked and no target performance and time-frames were assigned to projects. The target population was undefined both in the general text of the Plan and in the particular projects. "Roma" was not disaggregated by social class, geographic situation, housing/health/schooling/labour market conditions or by particular project-specific interests. In this sense, evaluators could not use any basis of comparison or previously established variables or indicators, but they had to focus on the measurable changes correlated to the Plan and the perceptions of the main stakeholders. A related challenge was to figure out whether (pro-)Roma organisations and individuals were meant by the Roma Plan to be (and hence to be evaluated as) beneficiaries, service-users, service-providers or adviser/decision-makers under the container concept of "participation". This fact implied the necessity to contrast findings against hypotheses, rather than against previously defined objectives of the Roma Plan.

### 3. Effects and Impacts of These Evaluations?

Patton (2008) argues that any utilisation-focused evaluation should start with the assessment of the '**readiness** for evaluation'. The 'protagonists' of the evaluation process reacted to the evaluation in diverse ways. The Roma federation and its Roma associations that actually triggered evaluation were satisfied to be able to express their

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criticism. Many Roma organisations showed readiness to self-criticism for not conducting advocacy actively enough. Quite the contrary, most public administration actors felt obliged rather than 'ready' to cooperate. One of the most important implications of the evaluation was what evaluators called the "stirring up effect": the Department in charge of the Plan launched an "official" evaluation and offered several press releases highlighting a favourable evolution of the Plan. At the public presentation of the evaluation in question, high-level representatives of the Catalan government did not turn up, and, except from one department, they did not show any interest to learn from the recommendations. Further, the use of the evaluation report is unknown by evaluators. The evaluation report claims that its "critical view aims to trigger an open public debate on diverse aspects [of the Catalan Roma Plan] among national and international civil-society activists". Unfortunately, this debate has not been opened to a wider public beyond the Roma and pro-Roma civil society.

In terms of Patton, "utilization-Focused Evaluation begins with the premise that evaluations should be judged by their utility and actual use" (2013). In this sense, this evaluation project could not obtain the desired results. Notwithstanding that, the Roma federation, co-author of the report, undoubtedly gained empowerment through the study, producing proofs and arguments for the public administration which points to at least one useful aspect of the project. Authors of the report believe that "clear, practical" recommendations "rooted in the lived experience of the Catalan citizens" (Rorke 2012: 9) cannot be completely disregarded in the future life of the Plan, neither at the elaboration of future official evaluations nor at the design of the third edition of the Catalan Roma Plan.

### Final Reflections and Recommendations

Evaluation of the Catalan Roma Plan offers enriching lessons for researchers and activists. As concluding remarks I comment on some of these.

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Firstly, our evaluation puts an emphasis on the contextualised and more precise and inclusive **definition of the target groups**, drawing on local evidence based diagnosis. Categories that may serve identity-politics or demands in cultural policies, are not necessarily useful, and may not coincide with those used in the context of educational, housing, health or social policies. Pushing forward the wider ethnic category, Roma, may hide inequalities that can be identified at the intersection of social class, gender or citizenship. Structures and measures that may empower a group of well-situated Roma individuals may disempower other Roma groups or individuals who do not participate in the institutionalised spaces of participation.

Secondly, closely linked to the first point is the question of **Roma-participation in the evaluation** process. In project evaluations this element is often oversimplified, without questioning really important aspects. The conditions and the quality of Roma participation generate a long list of questions. Do structures created for Roma participation have real emancipating potential? Do they empower relationships despite the unequal access to decision-making? Does individual empowerment necessarily induce group empowerment? To what extent power relations of internally heterogeneous “communities” become restructured due to unequal empowerment processes of the different sectors of the local community? Do institutional, formal, “invited” spaces of participation (Cornwall 2004) discourage and deform “popular”, spontaneous or more grassroots forms of participation? These are just some of the widely debated controversies related to the participation of the target population in development projects which remained unaddressed in the Catalan Roma Plan.

Thirdly, and more importantly, evaluation cannot be considered as an objective, value-free process. Many theorists consider **evaluation as a powerful advocacy tool** (Kopachevsky, Adrien et al. 2000). Nevertheless, “as a friend, one's ability to make a fair, impartial judgement about programme quality is seriously compromised” (Greene 1997), and may raise questions about bias, co-optation and contamination. As we pointed out in the previous case descriptions, focusing on one target group instead of another, listening to one sort of discourses but not others, highlighting dialogue and masking conflicts, projecting linear evolution without questioning sustainability, centring

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on local dynamics while forgetting about wider (and perhaps more influential) variables are, beyond methodological flaws, signs of implicit value orientations. What we can confirm based on the participatory evaluation project discussed above is that value-orientation is an inherent element of any knowledge production, including programme-evaluation. Thus, in order to increase the usefulness of the evaluation projects it is of paramount importance that underlying value-commitments and interests are made explicit.

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TATJANA PERIĆ<sup>15</sup>**EVALUATING PROJECTS TARGETING ROMA COMMUNITIES:  
A REVIEW THROUGH THE LENS OF GENDER EQUALITY***Abstract*

*Recent policy developments in Europe aiming to improve the situation of Roma communities, such as the Decade of Roma Inclusion or the National Roma Integration Strategies of European Union member states have largely failed to fully integrate gender equality components. Similarly, projects and programmes implemented in Romani communities often do not take into account the specific position of Romani women. On the other hand, monitoring and the evaluation of such projects very often cover gender equality issues only nominally, or not at all. This essay reflects on these issues and looks at evaluating projects targeting Roma communities specifically through the lens of gender equality. Based on the author's experience in evaluating projects targeting Roma communities, this essay argues that, primarily, there is a lack of systematic monitoring and evaluation of Roma-related projects, and secondly, that in cases where evaluations are undertaken, they often apply gender-blind methodologies. In some situations, gender-sensitive evaluation methodologies are even ignored; gender-sensitive evaluations are sometimes also plagued by the lack of appropriate data and indicators. The essay concludes with some proposals for improvement, including placing more effort into systematic monitoring and evaluation of projects targeting Roma communities, as well as taking into account gender equality and the situation of Romani women both in designing, implementing and evaluating such projects. Finally, the voices of Romani women – in their varying roles as beneficiaries, implementers or evaluation experts – must be heard, and women evaluators from Roma communities with expertise in gender equality need to be given places on evaluation teams.*

*Keywords: evaluation, gender equality, Roma, Romani women*

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### Introduction

For Romani women and men, the launch of the *Decade for Roma Inclusion 2005-2015* (hereafter: Roma Decade), an international initiative aimed at reducing the existing gap between Roma and non-Roma in twelve participating European states, marked one of the most important developments in the public policy approach to issues affecting Roma communities. In addition to the principal thematic areas of the Roma Decade – education, employment, health and housing – in meeting their commitments, the participating governments also needed to take into account the cross-cutting issues of poverty, discrimination and gender equality.

When joining the Roma Decade, all of the participating states were obliged to prepare and adopt National Action Plans (hereafter: NAPs) addressing the aforementioned thematic areas, and this process provided an opportunity to include the issues affecting Romani women into their new relevant strategic documents. This attempt to introduce gender equality elements into public policy relating to the Roma Decade was applied with considerable differences from one participating state to another. In some states – such as Serbia and Macedonia – from the beginning of the process specific chapters of NAPs were devoted to Romani women (Perić 2005). This momentum was further transferred to other levels, with instances of cities and municipalities creating their own formal policies referring to Roma and minority women (Perić 2012a). On the other hand, there were states which ignored the issue of gender in their Roma-related public policies created at the start of the Roma Decade, or did not even invite Romani women to participate in relevant consultation processes.

Similarly, member states of the European Union (EU) chose to largely ignore gender issues in their policy development regarding the National Roma Integration Strategies (hereafter: NRIS), despite recommendations on the awareness of gender dimension in the 10 Common Basic Principles on Roma Inclusion (Council of the European Union 2009). As the rapporteur Lívía Járóka, a member of the European Parliament who is herself of Romani origin, wrote in her recent report for the Committee for Women's Rights and Gender Equality, "the vulnerable situation of Roma and Traveller women has, in



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practice, remained unaddressed by European and national policy makers" (European Parliament 2013).

If we start from the premise that gender issues have been inadequately addressed in key policy documents, the question can be raised whether this negative tendency has also been reflected in projects implemented on the ground. Furthermore, could monitoring and evaluation serve as tools for finding the answers to this question? In the monitoring and evaluation of Roma-related projects, the gender equality aspects are covered most commonly either only nominally, or not at all. In addition, monitoring and evaluation exercises often ignore intersectionality, which is particularly relevant when evaluation projects affecting communities such as Roma, are frequently affected by complex and inter-related issues. This essay will reflect on some of these questions, with a caveat that it by no means claims to be a comprehensive review of gender and evaluation in Roma-related projects. It is based on anecdotal evidence from the author's practical experience as a human rights professional who has conducted evaluations of projects targeting Roma communities for both non-governmental and intergovernmental organisations, nationally and internationally.

### Gender Equality and Evaluation Methodologies: Some Common Scenarios

An analysis of the most common problems when it comes to evaluating gender aspects of policies related to Roma communities shows that, primarily, there is a lack of systematic evaluations and monitoring as a whole. When it comes to Roma-related issues, key international stakeholders voice concerns that, in general, projects targeting Roma communities are not adequately monitored and evaluated (Rorke 2010; UNDP 2010). Essentially, only a fraction of all projects dealing with Roma communities is evaluated. Naturally, this has an impact upon the evaluation of gender equality aspects within individual projects.

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Should we hope that evaluations also pay attention to issues relating to gender equality? Within the work that is actually being done in the framework of evaluations that are undertaken, there is, unfortunately, a notable lack of the gender perspective, or, in some cases, an absence of *meaningful* attention paid to gender equality issues. Based on the author's practical experience as an evaluator two common types of situation can be broadly differentiated in this respect.

One example of such situations is what virtually amounts to gender-blind evaluation methodologies which do not acknowledge gender issues as worthy of investigation in a certain context. These are the types of situations where extensive and elaborate evaluation designs completely ignore gender issues. The author recalls one such situation in Serbia, where a very detailed, 30-something page evaluation methodology, commissioned by a national human rights institution and aimed at evaluating state policies and programmes for Roma inclusion, completely ignored the issue of gender equality. As one of the experts on the evaluation team, I raised my concerns about this. However, the high-ranking official in charge of the evaluation exercise dismissed my complaint with a remark that gender equality would have been relevant if they decided to conduct an "evaluation on the situation of Romani women alone." Gender equality, thus, is restricted to the "gender box" – for some, it appears to be an aspect that only matters when we deal with the situation of women alone.

Evidently, such evaluations perceive Romani communities in an essentially genderless manner, which is both unrealistic as well as incorrect. Data available indicates that Romani women are by no means given the same type of opportunities as Romani men. According to a survey of Roma communities conducted by the EU Fundamental Rights Agency (hereafter: FRA) in 11 EU member states, the situation of Romani women is worse than that of Romani men in all key areas of their social lives (FRA 2013: 1). Only 77 per cent of Romani women said that they could read or write compared to 85 per cent of Romani men. According to the same source, only 21 per cent of Romani women have paid employment, compared to 35 per cent of Romani men. There seems to be no significant difference in the situation of Romani women outside the borders of the EU either. A survey conducted in 2011 by the United Nations Development Programme

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(hereafter: UNDP) in 12 states of Central, South-Eastern and Eastern Europe established that employment rates of Romani women are much lower than those of Romani men in all of the survey countries (O'Higgins 2012: 22-23). With regards to other thematic areas, the UNDP survey also revealed that Romani women are exposed to multiple housing deprivations; *inter alia*, less than a quarter of Romani women respondents had a legally registered address, and only a fraction of housing is legally owned by Romani women (Perić 2012b).

The data on the position of women in Romani communities clearly indicate that there is much left to be done on the way towards gender equality. If policies and projects aiming to improve the situation of Roma communities want to reach their aims in the case of both women and men, then they have to take into account gender equality. Consequently, the monitoring and evaluation of relevant policies and projects must be approached in a gender-relevant way. In the case from Serbia outlined above, an evaluator who follows the gender-blind methodology they were requested to apply would very likely miss seeing how, inadvertently, governmental programmes in the area of employment treat Romani women unfairly, as compared to Romani men. Here are some facts illustrating my claim: in the course of the evaluation, I received official data demonstrating that in 2011 Romani women presented only 47 per cent of all Romani persons registered with the National Employment Agency; in the same year Romani women represented only one third of beneficiaries of special measures related to subsidised self-employment for Romani individuals; among all Roma employed there were only 37 per cent women employed through the Agency that year; finally, women constituted less than a quarter (22%) of all Roma employed through public works (Ministry of Economy and Regional Development 2012). Evidently, measures wishing to improve the situation of both Romani women and men to equal measure have to give special attention to the situation of women. In case they do not, the results of their work will contribute to perpetuate the status quo when it comes to gender equality.

There are also examples of what could be named as unintentionally gender-blind evaluation methodologies. For instance, these can be evaluations based on household surveys, where, in most cases, it would be only men to speak up, as heads of house-

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holds are predominantly male; as the aforementioned UNDP survey showed, men represented the head of households in 74 per cent of the households visited (Perić 2012b: 44). Even though the evaluation questionnaires would include questions relating to gender, the responses to such questions would come mainly from men, increasing risk of a one-side perspective.

Alternatively, there are also instances of practice (or, rather, malpractice) where, despite clear methodological instructions to speak to equal numbers of women and men when conducting a survey, the researchers would ignore the requests and interview mostly men. This was the case with a household survey in Macedonia on Roma housing issues I designed in 2012. The researchers, who were local Romani activists, were asked to interview equal numbers of Romani women and men while visiting households within their survey region. Only one of three researchers eventually did so, and the other two (one male and one female researcher) did not do so, and ended up interviewing only 37 per cent of women (Perić 2013: 14). When asked for the reasons, the researchers replied that, "if there is a man present in the house, you have to talk to him." They did not want to challenge the traditional gender roles in the community, at the price of breaking the methodological rules; on the other hand, their other colleague chose to do so, and it did not appear to bear any negative consequences in the way of respondents' response. In any case, by directly or indirectly not asking them about their opinions and circumstances, Romani women are practically denied a voice in evaluation exercises, which creates a risk that no lessons are learnt in the evaluation in terms of gender equality, or inequality, in policy and project results.

### Other Types of Difficulties in Evaluating Gender Aspects

Unfortunately, even in situations when evaluations fully intend to investigate gender equality aspects of policies and projects, there are a number of obstacles that can arise. In some cases, simply, there is practically nothing to evaluate from the gender point of view, due to the all too common lack of explicit gender aspect in project planning. This can stem from ignoring gender issues altogether at the strategic level. One such exam-

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ple is the evaluation of National Action Plans for Roma within the context of the Roma Decade, where gender equality is not even mentioned in a particular National Action Plan, or taken into account in any way. A number of NAPs have been revised since the beginning of the Decade, and in some cases there was evident progress in terms of gender awareness. For instance, the initial NAP for Montenegro only mentioned Romani women in the context of health care primarily in terms of maternal health (Government of Montenegro 2005). However, the revised NAP for the period 2012-2016 highlights the situation of Romani women in the areas of health and political participation, with a chapter on violence against women and domestic violence (Government of Montenegro 2012). This is, of course, far from the ideal gender mainstreaming into the entire strategic document and its implementation, but it shows certain progress.

There are some other interesting situations evaluators can encounter. For instance, there are cases when Romani women greatly benefit from a project, even though this was not planned at all. In a housing project targeting small Roma communities, which I evaluated in Serbia, the implementing non-governmental organisation in question introduced mandatory quotas for the participation of Romani women in local community boards that represented the community in project-related decision making. The participation of Romani women, ensured in this way, proved beneficial for the organisation, the community and the individual women (Perić 2012a: 40-41). On the other hand, surprisingly, the initial project plan did not indicate any intention to pay such respect to gender equality issues. Similarly, in Montenegro, a 2011 project organising workshops for Romani boys and girls did not purposefully plan to reach out to Romani girls and ensure their participation, despite strong patriarchal norms in the local community. To the surprise of the implementers, girls even surpassed boys in workshop participation, and this was an important lesson learnt for the organisation.

In examples like these, an evaluator applying a strictly technical approach of measuring plans against results might have completely missed such worthy achievements. Nevertheless, there are practical ways to ensure that such omissions do not happen. Some donor institutions, such as the former Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), insisted that applicants' project proposals had to include a gender component in

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order to be eligible and the subsequent monitoring and evaluation also took into account the gender aspect, for instance by employing gender specialists.

The lack of statistical data disaggregated by sex also demonstrates the difficulties of evaluation from the gender equality perspective. Data disaggregated by sex help us ascertain the situation of women, and testify gender equality, or inequality. Collecting data disaggregated by sex in the case of Roma communities can tell us about the position of women and give indications of gender equality within a certain locality. Furthermore, to establish the different impact a policy or project might have on women and men respectively, the mechanisms used for evaluation must be gender-sensitive (Brambilla 2001: 1). Unfortunately, evaluators still often work with data and indicators that are relevant only for the Roma community as a whole, partially due to the unavailability of data disaggregated in such a way, but also because of lack of awareness that such data should be sought for and analysed.

In the instances where data disaggregated by both ethnicity and sex is indeed available, the proper *analysis* of data trends might be missing. In a number of examples, when such data is collected and easily available, which is certainly commendable, there is no evidence of any serious analysis of these data from the gender equality point of view. I have mentioned earlier the evaluation of state employment measures for Roma in Serbia, where the National Employment Agency regularly collects data regarding employment and employment-related measures for both Romani men and women. These data are available to the public through yearly reports of the relevant Ministry, or upon request from the Agency.

This is praiseworthy indeed. However, what remains problematic is that it does not seem that these data are indeed analysed from the gender equality point of view, and no policies are changed as a result of this. As illustrated earlier in the Serbian case, the official data clearly show that Romani women participate in and benefit from the so-called public works to a much lower extent, which renders this policy hardly suitable or useful for them. Still, no adequate conclusions are drawn by the relevant decision-makers, despite the glaring evidence they can gather from their own sources. The re-

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vised Serbian NAP for Roma employment 2012-2014 did introduce the plan for a gender analysis of existing employment and self-employment programmes (Government of Serbia 2012); at the time this article was completed, in January 2014, this analysis was unfortunately not yet conducted, though it would have been immensely beneficial for all stakeholders involved.

### Examples of Evaluations Focusing on Gender Equality

It should be noted, however, that there are also instances, though rare, of gender-specific evaluations of Roma-related projects, programmes and policies. I have been involved in several evaluations of this type. For instance, in Serbia, the Niš-based Women's Space, a Romani women's non-governmental organisation, initiated an analysis of the implementation of state measures for Romani women (Perić 2012a). Notably, there is also the analytical work of the international organisation Care International North West Balkans, which reviewed state-policies affecting Romani women in Croatia, Serbia, Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina, and produced a set of reports (Müller 2011).

Still, a possible shortcoming of these evaluations – by no fault of their own – is that their exclusive focus on gender might actually limit the scope of their audience, as they will commonly be relegated to the audience that is interested *primarily* in gender issues. To put it bluntly, we might be preaching to the choir. Decision makers, who need to hear our arguments most, may not receive our message since, due to the “gender label” they may view our analyses as something that does not belong to their mandates.

For the time being, the integration of gender aspects within evaluations is either lacking, or is not performed in a thorough manner. It is common to encounter extensive evaluation reports which present their gender-relevant findings in only one paragraph or several paragraphs at best, leaving the impression that the gender-relevant aspects were dealt with only nominally in the evaluation process. In my experience, when it comes to evaluations of projects targeting Roma communities, evaluations where gen-

der is mainstreamed throughout the process and are properly presented in the final documents are extremely rare.

### Some Proposals for Improvement

How can we improve evaluations of projects targeting Roma communities from the aspect of gender equality? Firstly, there is a need for more self-reflection, political good will and increased effort invested in a systematic approach to monitoring projects aiming to improve the situation of Roma communities. Further, we must insist on taking into account gender equality at the initial stages of planning and design, and continue adequately by integrating gender equality in all monitoring and evaluation processes taking place. Donor institutions can assist in this process, by requesting meaningful gender equality components in projects they support, that can be monitored and evaluated easily.

We must design gender-sensitive qualitative and quantitative indicators taking into account the position and needs of Romani women affected by the projects. Evaluation guidelines must ensure that adequate data is collected and that gender differences are monitored throughout implementation of policies and projects. Data must also be analysed through the gender equality lens, closely examining their results in the case of Romani women, and any lessons learnt should result in the changes of relevant policies. The evaluators themselves should be knowledgeable about the situation of Romani women in a certain thematic and geographic area. Alternatively, monitoring and evaluation specialists should work closely with gender specialists. Organising training in gender-sensitive monitoring and evaluation would surely benefit many stakeholders.

Last but not the least, evaluations must ensure that the voices of Romani women beneficiaries, as well as Romani women implementers, are heard. Romani women in different capacities should also be involved in the gathering and analysis of data used in evaluations, and Romani women evaluators, with expertise in gender-related issues need to be given the places they deserve on evaluation teams.



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## PROGRAMME OF THE WORKSHOP

EVALUATION OF POLICIES TARGETING THE ROMA – METHODOLOGIES  
AND METHODS

*Jakobinus Hall, Institute for Minority Studies, 1014 Budapest, Országház utca 30; 10 June 2013*

09:00 – **Introduction**

- 09:30
- Welcome, introductions and workshop objectives (**Anna-Mária Bíró, TLI**)
  - An overview and broad classification of existing reports and evaluations (**Louise Métrich, TLI**)

09:30 – **Reviewing evaluations: purposes, approaches, and methods; successes and failures**

- 13:00
- Government reports
  - International organisation reports
  - European institution and agency reports
  - Civil society reports

Speakers:

- **Csaba Andor, Ministry of Human Resources, Secretariat for Social Inclusion**
- **Dóra Husz, European Commission, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs, and Inclusion**
- **Sheena Keller, European Union Fundamental Rights Agency**
- **Bálint Ábel Bereményi, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona**
- **Andrey Ivanov, United Nations Development Programme**
- **Márton Rövid, Decade of Roma Inclusion Secretariat Foundation**

14:00 – **Evaluating evaluations: impact, outcomes and ways forward**

- 16:30
- Do evaluations reach their objectives?
  - What are their weaknesses and strengths? What is the common experience?
  - Do evaluations matter? If so, in what specific ways?
  - How could the media contribute to a deeper impact of evaluations?

Speakers:

- **Adam Kullmann, Making the Most of the EU funds for Roma, Open Society Foundations**
- **Tatjana Perić, Social Research Fellow, ERSTE Foundation**
- **Iulius Rostas, Corvinus University, Babes-Bolyai University**

Discussion moderated by **Stephan Müller, European Roma Rights Centre**

16:45 – **Conclusion; recommendations (Stephan Müller, Anna-Mária Bíró)**

- 18:00
- How to improve the evaluation of public policies targeting the Roma?

**ABOUT THE TOM LANTOS INSTITUTE**

The Tom Lantos Institute (TLI) is an independent human and minority rights organisation with a particular focus on Jewish, Roma and Hungarian communities and other ethnic or national, linguistic and religious minorities. As an international research, education and advocacy platform, TLI aims to bridge the gap between research and policy, norms and practice. In 2013-2016, TLI's principal strategic goal is human and minority rights education. TLI uses multidisciplinary approaches, focusing primarily on three issue areas:

- **Jewish life and anti-Semitism**
  - Countering anti-Semitism
  - Promoting the identity and participation of Jewish communities
- **Roma rights and citizenship**
  - Combating exclusion
  - Promoting effective participation in social, economic and cultural life and in public affairs
- **Human and minority rights**
  - Promoting human and minority rights education
  - Contributing to the effectiveness of the international regime of minority protection

TLI was established in Hungary in May 2011 to honour and continue the legacy of Tom Lantos, a Hungarian-American and the only Holocaust survivor ever elected to the United States Congress. A powerful voice for human rights and civil liberties throughout his life, he was the Co-Founder of the Congressional Human Rights Caucus and rose to become the Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee. After his death, the Congress permanently established the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission.