

Final Report

Roma WOMEN Empowered Initiative

IRCA implemented the Roma WOMEN Empowered initiative in two distinct phases, focusing on combating gender inequality among Roma women and girls, particularly those at risk of or affected by trafficking. These women and girls, as some of the most marginalized and vulnerable groups, often experience compounded challenges, including gender-based violence and systemic exclusion. This initiative aimed to address these issues by fostering empowerment through locally tailored adult education programs in literacy and lifelong learning.

The project directly impacted at least 100 Roma women and girls from disadvantaged backgrounds across Albania, many of whom were either trafficking survivors or identified as being at high risk. The initiative's core objective was to equip these women and girls with literacy, soft skills, and other competencies essential for achieving independence and resilience.

A key innovation of the initiative was the adoption of a peer-to-peer support approach. This method proved highly effective in creating a supportive and empowering environment for participants, helping them rebuild confidence and develop leadership skills. The approach also contributed significantly to promoting gender equality within the Roma community. Moreover, IRCA established Women's Clubs in various locations, which became central hubs for:

- Conducting awareness campaigns against trafficking and gender-based violence.
- Offering safe spaces for recreational and educational activities.
- Rebuilding trust and fostering community connections for survivors and those at risk.

One of the project's hallmark achievements was the publication of the "BASIC LIFE SKILLS" manual. This resource focused on enhancing educational capabilities, fostering personal empowerment, and enabling participants to engage more equally in society. The manual was

particularly impactful for trafficking survivors and those at risk, equipping them with critical tools for reintegration and strengthening their resilience against potential exploitation.

IRCA Welcomes the German Ambassador to Albania

As part of its efforts to empower Roma women and girls, IRCA welcomed the German Ambassador to Albania, Ambassador Bergner, during his visit to the organization. The meeting highlighted the strong partnership between IRCA and the German Embassy, emphasizing their shared commitment to combating trafficking and fostering social inclusion among Roma women and girls. The German Embassy's support has been instrumental in IRCA's educational and empowerment program targeting 100 Roma women and girls in Berat, Elbasan, Gjirokastër, and Grabian-Divjakë.

During the visit, Ambassador Bergner engaged in discussions about the systemic challenges faced by marginalized Roma communities, particularly the intersectionality of trafficking, gender-based violence, and limited access to education, healthcare, and employment. The Ambassador's presence reinforced the importance of tackling trafficking within Roma communities through education and empowerment.

The discussions also focused on future initiatives, such as:

- Strengthening educational programs tailored to the needs of trafficking survivors.
- Expanding vocational training opportunities for Roma women and girls to enhance employability and economic independence.
- Promoting gender equality and advocating for systemic changes to combat trafficking and its root causes within marginalized groups.

Ambassador Bergner commended IRCA's innovative approaches, particularly the use of peer-to-peer support and the establishment of Women's Clubs as safe spaces. He also highlighted the importance of the "BASIC LIFE SKILLS" manual as a critical tool in addressing the vulnerabilities of trafficking survivors and potential victims.

This collaboration between IRCA and the German Embassy underscores a shared vision for achieving sustainable development and inclusion for Roma communities. By focusing on trafficking prevention, education, and empowerment, this partnership continues to pave the way for a more equitable future, where Roma women and girls can thrive as active participants in Albanian society.

Conclusion

The Roma WOMEN Empowered initiative has made significant strides in addressing the vulnerabilities of Roma women and girls, particularly in the context of trafficking. Through innovative educational approaches, the establishment of support networks, and strategic collaborations, the initiative has empowered participants to build resilience and independence. The partnership with the German Embassy further amplifies these efforts, demonstrating a unified commitment to fostering social inclusion and combating trafficking among marginalized groups in Albania.

By bridging systemic gaps and fostering empowerment, the initiative lays a solid foundation for Roma women and girls to overcome adversity, assert their rights, and contribute to their communities. This progress signifies a crucial step towards achieving long-term, sustainable development for Roma communities across Albania.



IRCA expressed its gratitude for the ongoing support, emphasizing the importance of such initiatives in breaking the cycle of marginalization. The involvement of the German Embassy has been critical in ensuring the success of the program, which provides Roma women and girls with the tools they need to enhance their life chances and contribute to the development of their communities.

