



SHADOW REPORT

WESTERN BALKANS

ALBANIA

SHADOW REPORT

Period: Jan 2025 - March 2026

Publisher:

Institute of Romani Culture in Albania – IRCA

This Shadow Report on the implementation of public policies for Roma in Albania has been prepared within the framework of the regional project funded by the European Union “Beyond Barriers: Roma Resilience in the Western Balkans”, for the period January 2025 - March 2026.

This publication has been produced with the financial support of the European Union. Its contents are the sole responsibility of the Institute of Romani Culture in Albania – IRCA and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ALMPs	Active Labor Market Programs
ASCS	Agency for the Support of Civil Society
D.C.M.	Decision of the Council of Ministers
DVRM	Domestic Violence Referral Mechanism
EU	European Union
INSTAT	Institute of Statistics (Albania)
LGUs	Local Government Units
MoHSW	Ministry of Health and Social Welfare
NAES	National Agency for Employment and Skills
NAVETQ	National Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Qualifications
EA	Economic Assistance
NEETs	Not in Education, Employment, or Training
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
ROMALB	Roma Albania Monitoring Platform
STD	Sexually Transmitted Diseases
VET	Vocational Education and Training
MCD	Municipality Council Decision

CONTENT

1.Introduction.....	1
2.Institutional set-up	4
3. Employment.....	7
4. Housing.....	11
5. Health	14
6. Education.....	16
7. Civil registration.....	18
8. Social protection.....	20
9. Antigypsyism.....	22
10. Budget	24
11. Conclusions	26
12. Recommendations.....	28
Sources.....	30

1. INTRODUCTION

The Shadow Report on the Implementation of Public Policies for Roma and Egyptian Communities in Albania (2024 - 2025), prepared by the Institute of Romani Culture in Albania (IRCA), serves as an independent monitoring instrument assessing the effectiveness, impact, and inclusiveness of public policies under the National Action Plan for Equality, Inclusion, and Participation of Roma and Egyptians (2021 - 2025). The report examines progress across seven priority areas: employment, housing, education, healthcare, civil registration, social protection, and antigypsyism, providing a comprehensive overview of both achievements and persistent structural gaps.

Aligned with the EU Roma Strategic Framework 2020 - 2030 and the commitments of the Western Balkans Declaration on Roma Integration, the National Action Plan establishes a robust policy framework, including measurable objectives, indicators, and institutional responsibilities. Its implementation is supported by the ROMALB monitoring system, which enables data collection and reporting from central and local institutions. However, as highlighted throughout this report, the existence of a structured policy framework has not been sufficient to ensure consistent, effective, and equitable implementation.

The analysis is based on a mixed-methods approach, combining administrative data from public institutions, information obtained through official requests, and qualitative evidence from field observations and stakeholder engagement. This approach allows for a more nuanced understanding of both quantitative progress and lived realities within Roma and Egyptian communities.

The findings of the report reveal a persistent and systemic gap between policy commitments and actual outcomes. While certain sectors show incremental improvements particularly in service expansion, institutional reforms, and targeted interventions these gains remain fragmented and insufficient to address deeply rooted structural inequalities. Across all sectors, a recurring pattern emerges: programmes exist, legal frameworks are in place, and resources are allocated, yet access remains uneven, implementation inconsistent, and impact limited.

Moreover, the data indicate that many interventions continue to focus on short-term support rather than long-term, sustainable solutions. Structural barriers such as poverty, low educational attainment, lack of civil documentation, geographic isolation, and discrimination continue to hinder the full inclusion of Roma and Egyptian communities. At the same time, weaknesses in coordination, monitoring, and accountability mechanisms further limit the effectiveness of public policies.

As both a monitoring tool and a policy critique, this Shadow Report highlights the urgent need for a more integrated, targeted, and rights-based approach. It calls for strengthened institutional accountability, improved resource allocation, enhanced data systems, and meaningful participation of Roma and Egyptian communities in decision-making processes. Without such a shift, the risk remains that existing inequalities will persist, undermining both national objectives and Albania's commitments under European and international frameworks.

Employment

Employment continues to represent one of the most critical and structurally unresolved challenges for Roma and Egyptian communities. Despite increased participation in employment promotion programmes and vocational training, the transition into stable and formal employment remains limited. The data for 2024–2025 show that inclusion efforts are still heavily concentrated in short-term and low-skilled measures, particularly community public works (CMD 535), which account for the majority of beneficiaries.

Although participation increased to 499 beneficiaries in 2025, these programmes provide only temporary income and do not lead to sustainable labor market integration. Participation in higher-quality programmes such as self-employment, internships, and work-based learning remains extremely low. Structural barriers including low educational attainment, lack of registration, limited outreach, and distrust in institutions continue to exclude Roma and Egyptians from formal employment systems.

While initiatives such as the Youth Guarantee pilot show some positive outcomes, the majority of “positive exits” are again linked to temporary employment schemes rather than long-term opportunities. Overall, employment outcomes reflect a pattern of activation without transformation, where increased participation does not translate into economic empowerment or reduced dependency.

Housing

Housing conditions remain deeply unequal and continue to raise serious human rights concerns. A significant proportion of Roma and Egyptian families live in informal settlements characterized by poor infrastructure, overcrowding, and lack of access to basic services such as water, sanitation, and electricity.

While the rent subsidy programme has expanded and reached a growing number of beneficiaries, it provides only short-term relief and does not address structural housing insecurity. At the same time, programmes designed to provide long-term solutions such as low-cost housing, social housing, and reconstruction remain limited in scale and inconsistent in implementation.

Administrative barriers, including lack of civil documentation and slow legalization processes, further restrict access to housing programmes. Cases of forced evictions without adequate safeguards continue to be reported, highlighting gaps in the protection of fundamental rights. Overall, the housing sector illustrates a clear imbalance between immediate support measures and sustainable housing solutions.

Healthcare

The healthcare sector reflects a dual reality. On one hand, Albania has strengthened its legal and institutional framework, expanded preventive services, and increased outreach through mobile health teams. On the other hand, structural barriers continue to limit equitable access for Roma and Egyptian communities.

A significant number of individuals remain uninsured due to informal employment, lack of registration, or missing documentation. As a result, access to healthcare services remains uneven and

often limited to emergency or outreach-based interventions. While mobile health teams have reached over 52,000 individuals, they function as compensatory mechanisms rather than substitutes for full system inclusion.

Preventive care and maternal health services show positive trends, yet vaccination coverage and postnatal support remain insufficient. The absence of health mediators represents a critical gap, limiting the system's ability to address barriers related to trust, communication, and cultural sensitivity.

Education

Education outcomes remain fragile and continue to reflect structural inequalities. Although support measures such as free textbooks, transportation, scholarships, and extracurricular programmes have improved access and retention, overall participation and completion rates remain below national averages.

Dropout rates, while slightly reduced, remain high, particularly among boys, and reintegration mechanisms are insufficient. Structural barriers such as poverty, migration, and lack of civil registration continue to disrupt educational continuity.

At the same time, systemic gaps persist, including limited inclusion of Roma history and culture in curricula, lack of Roma language education in the formal system, and insufficient training of teachers on diversity and inclusion. These factors contribute to the reproduction of inequality across generations and limit the transformative potential of education.

Civil Registration

Civil registration remains a fundamental bottleneck affecting access to all other rights and services. Despite legal reforms and digitalization efforts, many Roma and Egyptian individuals continue to face barriers related to documentation, residence registration, and legal identity.

Although improvements in legislation have simplified procedures, implementation remains uneven. Financial barriers, such as the cost of DNA testing, and administrative challenges continue to prevent timely registration, particularly for children and individuals living in informal conditions.

Legal aid services play an important role in addressing these gaps, yet demand remains high and coverage limited. The persistence of unregistered individuals highlights the need for proactive identification mechanisms and stronger inter-institutional coordination.

Social Protection

Social protection remains the primary safety net for Roma and Egyptian communities but also reflects the depth of structural vulnerability. High dependence on economic assistance, particularly among women-headed households, indicates limited progress toward active inclusion and sustainable livelihoods.

While the system has been strengthened through digitalization and expansion of services, access remains uneven. The link between social protection and employment continues to be weak, with limited evidence of successful transitions from assistance to stable income.

The underutilization of targeted mechanisms, such as the 6% support fund, further highlights gaps in reaching the most vulnerable groups. At the same time, while the number of social services has increased, their functionality, outreach, and quality remain inconsistent.

Antigypsyism

Antigypsyism remains a pervasive and cross-cutting issue that continues to affect all sectors. Despite a comprehensive legal framework, discrimination persists in everyday life, limiting access to services, employment, and education.

Institutional response remains weak, with no reported cases processed by relevant bodies and no systematic monitoring of hate speech. This absence of data reflects underreporting, lack of trust in institutions, and limited awareness of complaint mechanisms rather than an absence of discrimination.

Representation of Roma and Egyptian communities in decision-making structures remains limited, further constraining their ability to influence policies that affect their lives. Overall, antigypsyism continues to be insufficiently addressed at both policy and implementation levels.

2. INSTITUTIONAL SET-UP

The coordination and implementation of Roma inclusion policies in Albania are embedded within a multi-level and multi-sectoral governance framework. At the core of this structure is the Thematic Subgroup on Social Inclusion, led by the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare (MoHSW) in its role as the National Roma Contact Point. This mechanism serves as the main coordination platform for overseeing the implementation of the National Action Plan for the Equality, Inclusion, and Participation of Roma and Egyptians, ensuring alignment across institutions and facilitating inter-sectoral cooperation.

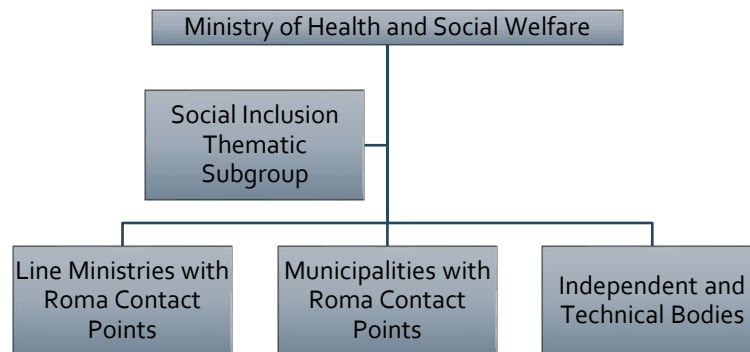
The institutional framework is supported by designated Roma focal points across all line ministries responsible for key policy areas, including education, health, housing, employment, social protection, justice, culture, and internal affairs. These focal points play a critical role in integrating Roma inclusion objectives into sectoral policies, ensuring policy coherence, and contributing to monitoring and reporting through the centralized ROMALB system. Their function is essential for translating national priorities into sector-specific actions.

In parallel, independent and technical institutions provide important operational and data-driven support to the framework. Entities such as the National Employment and Skills Service, the National Housing Authority, INSTAT, and the State Agency for the Protection of Child Rights contribute to the implementation of targeted measures and the generation of sectoral data. Their involvement strengthens the technical capacity of the system and supports evidence-based policymaking, particularly in tracking progress and identifying gaps.

At the local level, municipalities especially those with significant Roma and Egyptian populations have established local focal points to coordinate inclusion efforts. These actors play a key role in identifying community needs, facilitating access to services, and ensuring the implementation of national policies at the local level. Their proximity to communities enables more responsive and

tailored interventions, while also supporting greater participation of Roma and Egyptian communities in local decision-making processes.

Overall, this governance structure provides a comprehensive foundation for Roma inclusion. However, its effectiveness depends on sustained coordination, institutional capacity, and consistent data-driven monitoring across all levels of governance.



Graphic 1: Institutional set up

ASSESSMENT OF THE INSTITUTIONAL SET-UP

With the establishment of the Thematic Subgroup on Social Inclusion under the leadership of the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare (MoHSW), Albania has taken important steps to strengthen institutional coordination for the implementation of the National Action Plan for the Equality, Inclusion, and Participation of Roma and Egyptians 2021 - 2025. The subgroup functions as the main inter-institutional coordination platform, bringing together Roma focal points from all relevant line ministries to align sectoral interventions across key policy areas, including education, health, housing, employment, social protection, justice, culture, and public administration.

Beyond line ministries, a number of independent and technical institutions play a critical role in operationalizing the strategy. Institutions such as the National Employment and Skills Service, the National Housing Authority, INSTAT, and the State Agency for the Protection of Child Rights contribute sector-specific expertise, administrative data, and monitoring inputs. Their involvement is essential for strengthening the evidence base of policymaking and supporting performance tracking through national monitoring systems, including ROMALB.

At the local level, most municipalities particularly those with significant Roma and Egyptian populations have established local Roma focal points. These actors are responsible for coordinating the implementation of inclusion measures, facilitating access to public services, identifying community-level needs, and supporting data collection and reporting processes. Their role is central in translating national policy commitments into concrete actions and ensuring a closer link between institutions and Roma communities.

Despite these improvements in institutional architecture and coverage, significant challenges persist in ensuring effective governance and accountability. Coordination remains uneven across sectors, while the capacity and continuity of Roma focal points both at central and local levels are often limited due to frequent staff turnover and insufficient institutional support. Moreover, the absence of a high-level coordinating authority with a strong political mandate continues to constrain cross-sectoral oversight and strategic leadership.

To address these gaps, it is essential to further strengthen the mandate and operational capacity of the Thematic Subgroup, ensure adequate financial and human resources, and institutionalize the role of Roma focal points within administrative structures. Enhancing data quality, improving the functionality of monitoring systems such as ROMALB, and reinforcing vertical coordination between central and local levels will be critical to achieving more consistent and measurable progress in Roma inclusion.

EMPLOYMENT

Employment remains one of the most pressing and unresolved challenges affecting Roma and Egyptian communities in Albania. The latest data confirms that, despite the existence of national employment policies and active labor market measures, the transition of Roma and Egyptians from poverty and informal survival strategies into stable, formal employment remains limited and fragile.

The Western Balkans Partners' Declaration on Roma Integration within the EU Enlargement Process (Poznan Declaration, 2019) sets a clear benchmark: Roma employment in the public sector should increase proportionally with non-Roma employment, and the overall employment rate among Roma should reach at least 25%. In Albania, however, this target remains distant. Lower income levels, widespread poverty, and limited economic opportunities continue to push many Roma and Egyptians toward informal activities that provide immediate income, such as waste collection, second-hand trade, or other low-skilled work, rather than participation in formal employment or vocational training.

This situation is shaped not only by economic hardship, but also by deeper patterns of exclusion. Lack of trust in institutions, previous negative experiences, weak outreach, distance from workplaces or training centers, frequent migration, lack of civil documentation, and insufficient awareness of employment services all contribute to the marginalization of Roma and Egyptians from the formal labor market. Since most employment promotion programmes and vocational training opportunities are accessible only to individuals registered with employment offices, many Roma and Egyptians remain excluded at the very first step of the system.

Low educational attainment remains one of the strongest barriers. In 2024, around 45% of Roma unemployed jobseekers had not completed primary education, which sharply limits their access to vocational training and formal labor market integration. According to findings cited by the Ombudsperson, unemployment remains extremely high and closely linked to low levels of education. Administrative data from Elbasan Municipality shows that 71% of Roma and Egyptian jobseekers are beneficiaries of economic assistance, demonstrating deep dependence on social protection schemes and the limited capacity of current employment measures to produce sustainable exits from poverty. Similar conditions are reported in marginalized neighborhoods such as Ish Pjeshkorja in Berat, where families continue to rely on insecure and informal activities in the absence of effective employment and social inclusion interventions.

In 2025, a total of 6,045 Roma and Egyptian individuals were registered as unemployed jobseekers, including 2,589 Roma and 3,456 Egyptians. All registered jobseekers received career counselling and guidance services through standard employment mediation. This shows that registration can lead to access to services, but it also highlights the need to bring more unregistered Roma and Egyptians into contact with the system.

PARTICIPATION IN EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS

In 2024, Roma and Egyptians represented 11.7% of beneficiaries of employment promotion programmes, while they accounted for only 4.2% of all persons employed through the National Employment and Skills Agency. A total of 310 Roma and Egyptians were integrated through

employment promotion programmes, while 265 others accessed employment through other channels, including direct employment, self-employment, and community public works .

In 2025, participation in employment promotion programmes increased further. According to administrative data, 499 Roma and Egyptian unemployed jobseekers participated in employment promotion programmes, of whom 191 were Roma and 308 were Egyptians. The overwhelming majority of beneficiaries were concentrated in CMD 535 Community Public Works, which again confirms the continued reliance on short-term and low-skilled employment measures rather than long-term and sustainable labor market inclusion.

Type of Program	Egyptians			Roma			Total Participants
	Dropped Out	Completed/ Participated	Total	Dropped Out	Completed/ Participated	Total	
CMD 17 (Program 1 - Employment)		11	11			0	11
CMD 17 (Program 2 - Work-Based Training)	1	3	4			0	4
CMD 17 (Program 3 -Internships)		5	5	1	1	2	7
CMD 348 (Self-Employment Program)		3	3			0	3
CMD 401 (Social Reintegration)		22	22		12	12	34
CMD 535 (Community Public Works)	18	245	263	12	165	177	440
Total	19	289	308	13	178	191	499

Table 1: Roma/Egyptian Unemployed Jobseekers Participating in Employment Promotion Programs – 2025

These data show that community public works remain the dominant entry point into the labor market for Roma and Egyptians. This raises concerns about the quality and sustainability of these outcomes, especially when compared to the low number of beneficiaries in self-employment, internships, and work-based learning programmes.

GENERAL LABOR MARKET OUTCOMES

The employment picture in 2024–2025 shows some progress in activation, but outcomes remain uneven. In 2025, 454 Roma and Egyptian individuals were integrated into the labor market through active employment instruments, including direct employment, self-employment promotion, and community public works. Of these, 177 were Roma and 277 were Egyptians.

At the same time, vocational training participation improved in 2025 compared to 2024. During 2025, 356 Roma and Egyptian jobseekers attended vocational training courses, and 192 successfully completed them and received certification. This marks an important increase compared to 2024, when 200 individuals enrolled in vocational training and 150 completed training .

Indicator	2024	2025
Registered unemployed Roma & Egyptians	N/A	6,045
Registered unemployed Roma	N/A	2,589
Registered unemployed Egyptians	N/A	3,456
Beneficiaries of career counselling and guidance	6,586	6,045
Participants in vocational training	200	356
Certified after vocational training	150	192
Integrated via employment promotion programmes	310	499
Integrated into labor market through active employment instruments	575 ¹	454

Table 2: Labor Market Outcomes 2024 - 2025

Although 2025 shows increased participation in training and programmes, IRCA emphasizes that these figures should not be interpreted as evidence of structural improvement unless they translate into stable jobs, decent income, and long-term labor market attachment.

INTERNSHIPS AND WORK-BASED TRAINING

In 2025, 11 Roma and Egyptian jobseekers participated in the Internship and Work-Based Training Program under CMD No. 17, and approximately 82% successfully completed the programme. Importantly, all participants completed their internships in public institutions. This is a positive development, especially in light of the Poznan Declaration target on public sector employment, but the scale remains extremely limited.

YOUTH GUARANTEE SCHEME

The pilot phase of the Youth Guarantee scheme, implemented between 2024 and December 2025, included 153 Roma and Egyptian young people. Of these:

- 75.2% had positive exits
- 8.5% had negative exits
- 16.3% remained in the scheme at the end of the reporting period

The data for 2025 shows a notable increase in participation, with 115 Roma and Egyptian youth included during the year alone.

Registration Year / Reason for Exit	Egyptian	Roma	Total
2024	15	19	34
Positive Exit: Found Employment Independently	1	3	4
Positive Exit: Vocational Training Course	3	1	4
Positive Exit: Employment (VLP placement)	1	0	1

¹ *For 2024, this figure reflects the combined total reported through employment promotion programmes and other employment channels .

Positive Exit: CMD 348 (Self-Employment Program)	2	3	5
Positive Exit: CMD 535 (Community Public Works)	4	7	11
Negative Exit	3	5	8
Stock	1	0	1
2025	75	40	115
Positive Exit: Found Employment Independently	4	2	6
Positive Exit: Vocational Training Course	10	1	11
Positive Exit: Employment (VLP placement)	3	1	4
Positive Exit: CMD 17 (Program 1 - Employment)	3	0	3
Positive Exit: CMD 17 (Program 2 - Work-Based Training)	2	0	2
Positive Exit: CMD 348 (Self-Employment Program)	1	0	1
Positive Exit: CMD 535 (Community Public Works)	31	29	60
Negative Exit	3	1	4
Stock	18	6	24
Total	92	61	153

Table 3: Roma/Egyptian Unemployed Jobseekers Participating in the Youth Guarantee Scheme

While the Youth Guarantee pilot offers promising entry points, most positive exits are again linked to community public works rather than diversified or higher-quality employment pathways. This underlines the need for stronger targeting of Roma youth toward vocational training, apprenticeships, and private sector employment.

PUBLIC AND STATE ADMINISTRATION

The Poznan Declaration specifically calls for increased Roma employment in the public sector. Yet the available evidence suggests that Albania is still far from meeting this objective. In 2024, Roma and Egyptians employed in public administration remained limited, and the overall scale of public sector inclusion continues to be far below the level needed to produce proportional representation. The fact that all 2025 internship participants under CMD No. 17 were placed in public institutions is encouraging, but this remains a very small intervention and cannot substitute for systematic recruitment and retention policies.

During 2025, **seven success stories** of Roma and Egyptian unemployed jobseekers were promoted by the institutions. These individuals had participated in active labor market programmes and were highlighted as positive examples to increase community awareness and motivation. While such stories can play an important role in building trust, IRCA stresses that isolated good practices must be supported by broader structural reforms if they are to generate meaningful change.

The 2024 - 2025 data confirms that Roma and Egyptians in Albania remain trapped between poverty, informal survival strategies, and limited access to sustainable employment. Although 2025 shows progress in registration, vocational training participation, and participation in employment promotion programmes, the dominant model of inclusion continues to rely on low-skilled and short-term measures, especially community public works.

3. HOUSING

Housing remains one of the most critical and structurally unresolved challenges affecting Roma and Egyptian communities in Albania. In Albania the situation in 2024 - 2025 demonstrates that, despite an established legal framework and a range of social housing programmes, access to adequate, safe, and secure housing remains highly unequal and insufficient. A considerable number of Roma and Egyptian families continue to live in informal settlements, often without legal ownership, without connection to public utilities, and lacking basic infrastructure such as roads, water supply, sewage systems, and electricity. These living conditions are frequently characterized by overcrowding, poor construction quality, and geographic isolation, which further limits access to employment, education, and health services .

Although Law No. 22/2018 “On Social Housing” provides a 5% quota for Roma and Egyptian beneficiaries, in practice this provision has not translated into proportional access. The supply of affordable housing remains significantly below actual needs, while eligibility criteria such as civil registration, proof of income, and formal housing documentation continue to exclude many of the most vulnerable families. This reflects a broader structural gap between policy design and implementation.

At the policy level, Albania has strengthened its housing framework through a comprehensive package of by-laws supporting the implementation of the Social Housing Law. These include rent subsidies, low-cost housing schemes, housing improvement grants, temporary shelters, and procedures regulating access to these programmes. The adoption of Council of Ministers Decision No. 325 in May 2024, regulating private sector contributions to the public housing fund, represents a further step toward expanding financing mechanisms. However, from IRCA’s perspective, the absence of systematic monitoring and evaluation of these programmes limits the ability to assess their effectiveness and impact on Roma communities .

The performance of housing programmes during 2024 reflects a mixed trend. While some instruments have expanded, others particularly those ensuring long-term housing solutions have declined significantly. The rent subsidy scheme remains the most stable and widely used instrument, increasing steadily to reach 400 Roma and Egyptian families in 2024. This suggests that demand-driven and flexible support mechanisms can effectively reach vulnerable groups. However, rent subsidies provide only temporary relief and do not address structural housing insecurity.

In contrast, programmes designed to ensure sustainable housing outcomes show a clear decline. Low-cost housing support decreased dramatically, reaching only 10 families in 2024. Social rental housing provided by municipalities shows only modest and unstable coverage, with 130 families supported in 2024. Emergency support for families unable to meet housing-related financial obligations remained unchanged and limited in scope.

Indicator	2024	2025
Rent subsidy beneficiaries	400	N/A
Low-cost housing beneficiaries	10	N/A
Social rental housing (municipal stock)	130	N/A
Reconstruction grants (post-earthquake)	4	N/A
Emergency support (inability to pay rent/loan)	24	N/A

Table 4: Social Housing Indicators for Roma and Egyptians (2024 - 2025)

These trends clearly illustrate that while short-term assistance has expanded, long-term housing solutions remain underdeveloped and insufficient to meet the needs of Roma and Egyptian communities.

The implementation of housing policies largely depends on Local Government Units (LGUs), which continue to face significant financial and administrative constraints. Although government support to municipalities increased reaching 70% more municipalities by 2025 compared to 2020 this has not translated into consistent improvements in housing outcomes. Planning capacity also remains unstable. After a peak in 2023, when 25 municipalities approved five-year housing plans, the number dropped to 13 in 2024, suggesting inconsistencies in planning cycles and implementation priorities. There are no available data for the year 2025.

Access to housing programmes continues to be constrained by multiple and often overlapping barriers. Many Roma and Egyptian families lack civil documentation, do not meet formal income criteria, or are excluded due to their residence in informal settlements. Legalization processes for informal housing remain slow and incomplete, leaving many families without secure tenure. In some cases, forced evictions have been reported without adequate legal safeguards or alternative housing solutions, further exacerbating vulnerability.

In 2025, some positive steps were taken to strengthen the legalization process. Dedicated municipal offices were established in Fier and Vlorë, where 51 local government representatives were trained and 65 Roma families received direct assistance with legalization procedures. While these initiatives contribute to improving housing security, they remain limited in scale and need to be expanded nationwide.

Housing conditions in several communities remain critical and raise serious human rights concerns. According to findings from the Ombudsperson, Roma families in the Tepe area of Shkodër were relocated without proper procedures and left in inadequate conditions without access to water and electricity. In the Jani Vruho neighborhood in Berat, Egyptian families face health risks due to deteriorating asbestos roofing. In Ish Pjeshkorja, approximately 150 Roma families continue to live in unsafe dwellings without sewage systems, insulation, or basic infrastructure, while in Baltëz, Fier, around 350 Roma families face lack of potable water and environmental pollution. These cases illustrate systemic failures in ensuring minimum housing standards and coordinated institutional responses.

Overall, the data for 2024 - 2025 confirms that housing conditions for Roma and Egyptian communities remain structurally inadequate and deeply unequal. While certain programmes, particularly rent subsidies, have expanded, they do not address the root causes of housing insecurity.

At the same time, programmes aimed at providing long-term solutions such as low-cost housing, reconstruction, and legalization remain insufficient in scale and continuity.

4. HEALTH

Health remains a critical dimension of social inclusion for Roma and Egyptian communities in Albania. The housing situation in 2024 - 2025 reflects a dual reality: while the legal and institutional framework of the healthcare system has improved, structural barriers continue to prevent Roma and Egyptian communities from fully benefiting from available services.

Recent legal developments, including amendments to the healthcare system and the adoption of the Law on Compulsory Health Insurance (No. 65/2023), have strengthened governance, expanded coverage categories, improved access to reimbursable medicines, and reinforced the role of primary healthcare and referral systems. These reforms aim to bring services closer to communities and improve system efficiency. However, as these measures are not specifically tailored to Roma and Egyptian communities, their impact remains uneven.

A fundamental barrier continues to be limited access to health insurance. A considerable number of Roma and Egyptian individuals remain uninsured due to informal employment, lack of registration as unemployed, or absence of personal documentation. As a result, they are excluded from the National Health Insurance Fund and face restricted access to healthcare services. This situation is further aggravated by poverty, low levels of education and health literacy, and persistent discrimination. Poor housing conditions and geographic isolation also play a significant role, as many Roma and Egyptian families live far from healthcare facilities or in areas with limited infrastructure. These factors collectively contribute to lower utilization of healthcare services and poorer health outcomes, including lower vaccination coverage among children compared to the general population.

HEALTHCARE INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICE DELIVERY

In 2024, the network of healthcare services in areas inhabited by Roma and Egyptian communities showed signs of consolidation rather than expansion. The number of healthcare centers operating near these communities decreased to 167, while the number of permanent ambulatory posts increased to 132, indicating a shift toward more localized and continuous service provision closer to communities.

Indicator	2024	2025
Healthcare centers	167	N/A
Permanent ambulatory posts	132	N/A

Table 5: Healthcare Infrastructure near Roma and Egyptian Communities (2024)

This transition reflects efforts to improve proximity and continuity of care. However, from IRCA's perspective, the reduction in healthcare centers may also indicate reduced service availability in certain areas, particularly for communities located in remote or informal settlements.

Mobile health teams remain one of the most effective instruments for reaching marginalized populations. In 2024, 52,429 Roma and Egyptian individuals received services from mobile medical teams, demonstrating the continued importance of outreach-based healthcare delivery. These teams

serve as a critical bridge between communities and formal healthcare institutions, particularly for individuals facing mobility, documentation, or trust barriers.

Preventive healthcare services have shown positive developments. In 2024, 19,739 Roma and Egyptian individuals benefited from preventive health examinations, including check-ups, screenings for specific diseases, and reproductive health services. Women represented the majority of beneficiaries, indicating a stronger focus on maternal and reproductive health, but also pointing to the need for improved outreach among men.

Vaccination coverage, however, remains a concern. Although precise figures vary, available data indicate that vaccination rates among Roma and Egyptian children remain lower than the national average, reflecting persistent inequalities in access to preventive healthcare services.

MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH

Maternal health services show both progress and critical gaps. Access to prenatal care has improved significantly. In 2024, 3,833 Roma and Egyptian women benefited from free medications and prenatal examinations, indicating a substantial expansion of maternal health coverage.

At the same time, the “Baby Bonus” programme continued to provide financial support to families with newborns, reaching 761 Roma and Egyptian families in 2024. Despite this progress, the programme achieved only around 71% of its annual target, suggesting the need for stronger outreach and better coordination with civil registration services. However, a major concern is the sharp decline in postnatal support. In 2024, only 67 Roma and Egyptian mothers received maternal and infant care packages, compared to significantly higher levels in previous years. This decline may indicate gaps in programme continuity, funding, or reporting, and raises concerns about the sustainability of support for vulnerable mothers.

Encouragingly, the number of children born at home has decreased to 1 case in 2024, suggesting improved access to institutional healthcare services and better referral systems for pregnant women.

HEALTH EDUCATION AND DISEASE PREVENTION

Health education and disease prevention activities remain essential but unevenly implemented. In 2024, 759 awareness campaigns related to sexual and reproductive health and sexually transmitted infections (STIs) were conducted, reflecting a partial recovery compared to previous years but still below earlier levels. Similarly, 1,950 Roma and Egyptian individuals benefited from STI screening and diagnosis services in 2024, indicating a moderate improvement but still highlighting the need for sustained and targeted interventions.

IRCA emphasizes that effective prevention requires consistent outreach, culturally adapted materials, and direct linkage between awareness campaigns and concrete services such as testing and treatment.

HEALTHCARE WORKFORCE AND SYSTEM CAPACITY

The healthcare system has made progress in strengthening staff capacity. In 2024, 494 healthcare workers were trained to provide equal and inclusive services, particularly for individuals living in substandard conditions or experiencing social exclusion. This reflects a high level of institutional commitment to improving service quality and addressing inequalities.

At the same time, employment of Roma and Egyptian individuals within the healthcare system remains relatively stable, with 155 individuals employed in 2024. While this demonstrates some level of inclusion, representation remains limited and does not yet reflect proportional participation.

A major gap remains the absence of health mediators, as the legal framework required for their establishment has not been approved. Consequently, no Roma or Egyptian health mediators have been trained or employed. From IRCA's perspective, this represents a critical missed opportunity, as mediators are essential for overcoming language barriers, building trust, and facilitating access to healthcare services, particularly for women and vulnerable groups.

The 2024 - 2025 data demonstrates that Albania has made important progress in expanding healthcare services for Roma and Egyptian communities, particularly through preventive care, maternal health services, mobile health teams, and staff training. However, these improvements are not sufficient to address the deep-rooted structural barriers that continue to limit equitable access.

Achieving real progress requires a shift toward a more inclusive, targeted, and community-based approach. This includes expanding health insurance coverage, strengthening outreach mechanisms, institutionalizing the role of health mediators, improving coordination between health and social services, and ensuring the continuity and sustainability of key programmes. Without these structural reforms, health inequalities will continue to persist, reinforcing broader patterns of exclusion affecting Roma and Egyptian communities in Albania.

5. EDUCATION

Education for Roma and Egyptian children in Albania continues to be one of the areas where inequalities with the non-Roma population emerge early in the school cycle. Although some progress in enrollment and participation has been achieved, overall outcomes remain significantly below national averages and regional targets. In the Western Balkans context, increasing completion of basic education toward 90% and raising enrollment and completion rates in upper secondary education toward 50% remain key challenges, where a considerable gap persists.

Structural barriers such as poverty, lack of civil registration, limited access to information, and inadequate infrastructure continue to affect access to education. Migration and mobility further exacerbate these challenges, leading to discontinuity in schooling and increased dropout rates. According to findings reported by the Ombudsman, both the educational gap and the preservation of linguistic identity remain weak. In practice, the teaching of the Romani language continues to depend on informal community initiatives rather than being integrated into the public education system. For

example, in Mbrostar (Fier), Romani language teaching is provided privately due to rigid legal criteria requiring a 20% population threshold. This has led to recommendations for more flexible criteria and the development of dedicated teaching materials.

Institutional efforts during 2024 built on previous initiatives aimed at improving enrollment, particularly in preschool education and through the identification of unregistered children. However, these gains remain fragile. Data indicate a continued decline in the number of Roma and Egyptian children enrolled in preschool and compulsory education, reaching 9,377 children in 2024, while broader data trends show a decrease to 20,561 children in 2025, reflecting the combined effects of migration, demographic changes, and systemic barriers.

Year	Number of Children
2024	9,377
2025	20,561

Table 6: Roma and Egyptian Children Enrolled in Education

This declining trend highlights the need for stronger field identification mechanisms, rapid (re)enrollment systems, and continuous monitoring of children at risk of dropout, especially those affected by migration.

Free textbooks for Roma and Egyptian students continue to be guaranteed across all levels of pre-university education, ensuring that direct education costs are reduced. However, financial support measures such as exemption from preschool fees remain unstable. In 2024, only 213 children benefited from fee exemptions, indicating gaps in access, awareness, and administrative procedures.

At the same time, support measures aimed at improving access and retention show more positive trends. Free transportation continued to expand, reaching approximately 979 beneficiaries in 2025, reflecting stronger institutional engagement in addressing distance-related barriers. Similarly, extracurricular programmes designed to support learning outcomes such as homework assistance and remedial classes have increased significantly, reaching 975 beneficiaries in 2025, demonstrating their growing importance as an inclusion mechanism.

Indicator	2024	2025
Exemption from preschool fees	213	N/A
Free transportation beneficiaries	600	979
Extracurricular programme beneficiaries	395	975

Table 7: Support Measures for Roma and Egyptian Students

These measures are essential, particularly in rural and marginalized areas, but require sustained funding and targeted outreach, especially toward Roma families who remain underrepresented among beneficiaries.

Scholarship programmes continue to function as a key instrument for reducing dropout and promoting educational continuity. In 2024, 649 Roma and Egyptian students benefited from

scholarships, while in 2025 this number increased further to 731 beneficiaries, reflecting strengthened identification mechanisms and improved outreach.

Despite these positive developments, school dropout remains a significant challenge. In 2024, 591 students dropped out of school and 132 were reintegrated, while in 2025 dropout decreased to 440 students, and reintegration increased to 103 cases. Although this indicates some improvement, the gap between dropout and reintegration remains substantial.

Indicator	2024	2025
Students who dropped out	591	440
Students reintegrated	132	103

Table 8: Dropout and Reintegration in Education

Field observations suggest that dropout is particularly prevalent among Roma boys, often due to poverty, early involvement in informal labor, and lack of inclusive school environments. This underscores the need for early intervention, continuous monitoring, and targeted support measures. The link between education and social protection remains critical. In 2024, 891 Roma and Egyptian families were referred to social protection services, indicating improved coordination between institutions but also highlighting persistent structural vulnerabilities. While data for 2025 are not yet available, the continued scale of need suggests that these mechanisms remain essential.

Despite progress in some areas, significant gaps in inclusive education persist. There is no reported progress in the recruitment of Roma and Egyptian teachers, parental literacy programmes remain limited, and no systematic training of education staff on inclusion, diversity, or antigypsyism has been implemented. Curriculum reform remains insufficient, with limited inclusion of Roma history, culture, or language in the education system.

Participation of Roma and Egyptian parents in school governance remains weak, and while no segregated classes were reported in 2024, continuous monitoring is required to prevent segregation and ensure inclusive learning environments.

Efforts to promote intercultural dialogue and awareness have increased. In 2025, 786 awareness campaigns and information sessions were conducted with Roma and Egyptian parents, aiming to strengthen engagement and highlight the importance of education. While this represents a positive step, IRCA emphasizes that awareness-raising alone is insufficient without addressing underlying structural barriers such as poverty, mobility, and institutional exclusion.

6. CIVIL REGISTRATION

Civil registration remains a fundamental right and a prerequisite for accessing services, exercising rights, and ensuring full participation in society. Despite legal and institutional progress, civil registration continues to represent a structural barrier for Roma and Egyptian communities in Albania. Lack of registration or incomplete documentation continues to exclude individuals from essential services such as education, healthcare, housing, and social protection.

Although improvements have been made in recent years, cases of unregistered Roma and Egyptian individuals continue to be identified. The main causes include births outside the healthcare system, failure to meet the legal deadlines for registration, births to underage parents, and births occurring “in movement.” These are compounded by low levels of awareness about registration procedures and the importance of legal identity. Additionally, challenges related to residence registration remain significant. Families living in informal settlements or without formal rental or ownership contracts often face difficulties in proving residence, which limits their access to locality-based services .

Another critical challenge relates to the establishment of paternity and maternity. Judicial procedures remain lengthy and costly, particularly due to the need for DNA testing, which imposes a significant financial burden on vulnerable families. Similarly, the registration of children born abroad remains problematic, especially in cases where parents lack legal residence status and are issued incomplete or non-recognized documentation that cannot be legalized through consular services.

In line with international obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), Albania is required to ensure immediate birth registration, reduce administrative barriers, and prevent statelessness. While legal reforms have moved in this direction, implementation gaps remain.

LEGAL AND INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

Important legal and procedural improvements have been introduced to reduce barriers to civil registration. Amendments to **Law No. 56/2024 “On Civil Status”** have clarified definitions such as residence and place of stay, reduced administrative discretion, and introduced more flexible procedures for registration. The introduction of a 30-day deadline for residence changes, as well as the possibility of field verification by administrative units, has enabled families without formal documentation to prove residence through alternative means.

Digitalization has also improved access. Changes to the legal framework have enabled online declaration and modification of residence through the e-Albania platform, allowing document uploads, electronic confirmation, and automatic data exchange between institutions. These measures aim to reduce administrative burden, costs, and waiting times, particularly for families with high mobility.

Despite these improvements, IRCA notes that implementation remains uneven, and several measures still require secondary legislation or operationalization. Key gaps remain in the functioning of the temporary register for unregistered individuals, reimbursement mechanisms for DNA testing, and inter-institutional data sharing protocols.

UNREGISTERED CHILDREN AND CIVIL STATUS

Although progress has been made in identifying unregistered children, the issue has not been fully resolved. Data show a declining trend in the number of identified unregistered children up to 2023; however, updated data for 2024 and 2025 are not available, indicating gaps in reporting and monitoring systems.

Capacity-building of civil status officials remains inconsistent. While previous years saw significant training efforts, no data are reported for 2024–2025 regarding the number of trained civil status officers. This suggests either a lack of continued training or gaps in reporting. Similarly, support

measures such as reimbursement of DNA testing fees which are essential for birth registration and recognition of parenthood have not been reported for 2024 - 2025. The absence of a dedicated legal framework (secondary legislation) for reimbursement remains a key obstacle to implementation.

LEGAL AID SERVICES AND ACCESS TO JUSTICE

Access to legal aid remains a critical component in addressing civil registration challenges. By 2025, free legal aid services are provided through 20 Primary Legal Aid Service Centers, covering major regions across Albania. In addition, 14 non-profit organizations are authorized to provide legal services, and 140 lawyers have signed contracts to provide secondary legal aid.

In 2025, 424 Roma and Egyptian individuals benefited from primary legal aid services, of which 260 cases were handled by primary legal aid centers and 164 by NGOs. While this represents a slight decrease compared to 2024 (547 beneficiaries), it still reflects sustained demand and continued reliance on legal aid mechanisms.

Indicator	2024	2025
Beneficiaries of primary legal aid	547	424
Primary legal aid service centers	20	20
Authorized NGOs providing legal aid	14	14
Lawyers providing secondary legal aid	166	140

Table 9 : Legal Aid Services for Roma and Egyptians

During 2025, the Free Legal Aid Directorate also strengthened institutional cooperation by concluding 13 agreements with municipalities, universities, and institutions, aiming to improve access to justice and expand service delivery.

CHILD PROTECTION AND RELATED RISKS

Civil registration is closely linked to child protection. Roma and Egyptian children remain disproportionately represented among vulnerable groups, particularly those engaged in child labor or at risk of exploitation.

In 2024, 98 Roma and Egyptian children were identified as being involved in exploitative labor situations, including begging, informal selling, and waste collection. These cases were identified by 32 multidisciplinary field teams operating across several municipalities, with the highest concentration in Elbasan, Shkodër, and Lushnje.

At the same time, the number of potential victims of trafficking increased to 174 in 2024, indicating growing risks despite improvements in institutional response capacity. Training of multidisciplinary teams has increased significantly, strengthening the ability to identify and respond to such cases.

7. SOCIAL PROTECTION

During 2024 - 2025, Albania has consolidated its social protection system through the strengthening of digital platforms and simplification of administrative procedures. Nevertheless, these improvements have not been sufficient to address the specific barriers faced by Roma and Egyptian communities. Lack of personal documentation, difficulties in transferring residence, functional

illiteracy, and complex administrative procedures continue to limit effective access to social protection schemes. As a result, a significant portion of Roma and Egyptian families remains either excluded or only partially integrated into the system .

The adoption of the National Social Protection Strategy 2024–2030 represents an important step toward improving the system, with a focus on expanding social services, strengthening decentralization, and improving access for vulnerable groups, including Roma and Egyptians. In parallel, the Employment and Skills Strategy 2023–2030 aims to strengthen the link between social protection, vocational training, and employment, moving beyond cash assistance toward sustainable reintegration pathways.

ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE AND DEPENDENCY

Economic Assistance (EA) remains the primary support mechanism for Roma and Egyptian families. Data for 2024 - 2025 show that dependence on this scheme remains high, reflecting persistent vulnerability and limited transition toward active inclusion.

In 2025, 449 Roma and Egyptian women heads of household benefited from Economic Assistance, highlighting the gender dimension of poverty. Additionally, 1,139 families received conditional support linked to children’s school attendance, indicating the continued use of social protection as a tool to promote education.

However, the conditional 6% support fund esigned to assist families who do not qualify under the standard scoring system remains critically underutilized, with only 97 beneficiaries recorded in 2024 and no updated data for 2025. This signals a significant gap in reaching the most vulnerable families who remain outside formal eligibility criteria.

Social protection policies aim not only to provide financial assistance but also to support reintegration into employment and social services. However, data indicate that progress in this area remains limited.

Local Government Units have played an important role in referring Roma and Egyptian families from Economic Assistance to other services, including employment programs, vocational training, housing, and civil registration. During the broader implementation period, thousands of individuals were referred; however, sustained reintegration remains a challenge.

The linkage between social protection and employment remains weak, with limited evidence of successful transitions from assistance to sustainable income.

SOCIAL FUND AND SERVICE PROVISION

The Social Fund continues to be a key instrument for expanding community-based services. Between 2021 and 2024, the number of social care services increased significantly, reaching 93 established services nationwide. This expansion reflects progress in decentralizing service delivery and strengthening municipal capacities.

However, the main challenge remains not only the establishment of services but their functionality. IRCA emphasizes that many services exist in formal terms but lack effective outreach, standardized case management, and consistent quality.

Indicator	2024-2025
Social care services established	93

Table 10: Expansion of Social Care Services

Despite this expansion, access remains uneven across municipalities, and service delivery is often limited by insufficient human and financial resources.

The “Client in Need” status, particularly related to electricity compensation, has expanded in recent years and remains an important support mechanism.

Year	Number of Families
2024	740
2025	539

Table 11: Roma and Egyptian Families with “Client in Need” Status

While the number of beneficiaries remains relatively high, IRCA notes a critical gap: despite being granted the status, many families do not receive actual financial compensation for electricity costs. This disconnect between administrative recognition and real benefit significantly reduces the effectiveness of the measure.

Protection mechanisms for victims of domestic violence and trafficking have been strengthened institutionally, particularly through the National Referral Mechanism (NRM), which is operational in all 61 municipalities and supported by the REVALB system. However, data for 2024 - 2025 indicate a decline in supported cases and protective measures, raising concerns about identification and response capacity. While the mechanism is fully operational, the decline in cases suggests potential gaps in identification, outreach, and follow-up.

Social protection is closely linked to child protection, particularly for children in street situations or at risk of exploitation. In 2024, 94 Roma and Egyptian children in street situations received support services.

This figure reflects both the scale of vulnerability and the importance of local government structures in identifying and supporting children at risk. However, compared to previous years, the decrease in identified cases may indicate reduced outreach or underreporting.

8. ANTIGYPSYISM

During 2024 - 2025, addressing discrimination and antigypsyism against Roma and Egyptian communities in Albania continues to face significant challenges, despite the existence of a relatively comprehensive legal framework prohibiting discrimination. From the perspective of the Institute of Romani Culture in Albania (IRCA), the main issue is not the absence of laws, but rather the weak and inconsistent implementation of these protections in practice. Antigypsyism continues to manifest in everyday life through unequal access to services, stigmatization in education and employment, and limited institutional responsiveness to complaints. Although awareness of discrimination has increased in general discourse, this has not translated into stronger reporting mechanisms or more effective institutional action.

At the local level, efforts to monitor and analyze inequalities affecting Roma and Egyptian communities have declined. In 2024, only 36 activities were carried out to assess disparities between Roma and Egyptian communities and the rest of the population. While updated figures for 2025 are not systematically available, there is no evidence of a significant increase in such activities. This reduction suggests a weakening of institutional and civil society engagement in anti-discrimination work. From IRCA's perspective, continuous monitoring and evidence generation are essential for understanding the scale and forms of discrimination and for designing effective policy responses. Without regular data collection and analysis, antigypsyism risks remaining invisible in institutional reporting.

Representation of Roma and Egyptian communities in local governance structures shows only modest progress. In 2024, five municipalities included Roma or Egyptian representatives in municipal councils, reflecting a slight improvement compared to previous years. However, no further expansion has been reported in 2025. While this indicates some level of inclusion, representation remains limited in scope and insufficient to ensure meaningful participation in decision-making processes. IRCA considers that without broader and more systematic inclusion of Roma and Egyptian representatives in governance structures, policies will continue to be designed without adequately reflecting community needs.

Institutional response to discrimination cases remains particularly weak. In 2024, no cases were reported or processed by the Ethics and Discipline Commission, and there is no available evidence indicating an increase in reporting or case handling in 2025. This absence of recorded cases should not be interpreted as an absence of discrimination. On the contrary, it is more likely to reflect underreporting, lack of trust in institutions, limited awareness of complaint mechanisms, and barriers in accessing justice. Many Roma and Egyptian individuals may not pursue formal complaints due to previous negative experiences or the perception that reporting will not lead to meaningful outcomes. As a result, discrimination remains largely unaddressed and invisible in official statistics.

Monitoring of hate speech against Roma and Egyptian communities remains critically underdeveloped. In both 2024 and 2025, no civil society projects funded by the Agency for the Support of Civil Society focused on monitoring or reporting hate speech targeting these communities. This reflects a continued gap in national priorities, as hate speech has not been systematically recognized as an area requiring dedicated intervention. Consequently, both online and offline hate speech incidents remain largely undocumented and insufficiently addressed, contributing to the normalization of discriminatory narratives.

Although Albania has established institutional mechanisms such as the Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination and other oversight bodies, their effectiveness remains limited by weak coordination, insufficient training, and fragmented data systems. There is little evidence of systematic training for public officials on antigypsyism, diversity, or inclusive service provision. Furthermore, broader reforms in social protection and digital governance, while improving administrative efficiency, have not specifically addressed discrimination-related barriers faced by Roma and Egyptian communities.

9. BUDGET

The National Action Plan for Equality, Inclusion and Participation of Roma and Egyptians 2021–2025 was designed with a total indicative cost of ALL 4,753,255,816 (EUR 38,332,708). According to the costing framework, the majority of financing was expected to come from the state budget, followed by local government units (LGUs), and to a much smaller extent, donors. The overall financial gap was estimated at 7%. For the period 2024 - 2025, the indicative cost to be financed from public funds alone was approximately ALL 1.38 billion, highlighting the importance of sustained financing and effective allocation in the final phase of implementation.

The 2024 expenditure data shows a highly uneven distribution of financial resources across priority areas.

Social protection accounts for the largest share of spending, reaching EUR 3,528,924. This is consistent with the original NAP costing, where social protection was the most resource-intensive sector. The high level of expenditure reflects continued reliance on income support measures, food assistance, social care services, referral mechanisms, and community-based services. However, this also indicates that policy implementation remains heavily focused on compensatory and reactive measures rather than structural transformation. The dominance of social protection spending suggests that Roma and Egyptian communities continue to face persistent socio-economic vulnerability and dependency on welfare schemes.

Health represents the second largest area of expenditure, with approximately EUR 687,000. These funds supported preventive services, mobile health teams, free check-ups, maternal care, and essential medicines. While this indicates a relatively stable level of investment, the available indicators reveal structural weaknesses, such as a decline in the number of health centers near Roma and Egyptian settlements and the absence of community mediators. This suggests that financial inputs have not been fully translated into sustainable improvements in access and service delivery.

In education (including intercultural dialogue and culture), total spending reached EUR 414,549. Investments were primarily directed towards scholarships, free textbooks, transportation support, literacy courses, and financial incentives for school attendance. However, when compared to the initial NAP costing, there is a clear gap between planned and actual spending. Several key structural measures—such as increasing the number of Roma teachers, curriculum reform, teacher training, and the promotion of the Roma language—remained unfunded. This indicates that spending has focused more on short-term support measures rather than systemic reforms to ensure inclusive education.

Housing expenditures amounted to EUR 362,253, which remains relatively low compared to the strategic importance and high capital costs foreseen in the NAP. Funding was mainly directed toward rent subsidies and limited local housing support schemes. Large-scale interventions such as legalization of informal settlements, infrastructure development, and long-term housing programs appear underfunded or only partially implemented. This reflects a significant gap between strategic objectives and actual implementation capacity.

Employment and vocational education and training (VET) received EUR 292,121. Spending focused on small grants for self-employment, employment promotion programs, career counselling, and access to vocational training. However, key structural measures such as sustainable job placement after training, employment mediators, and reintegration schemes were not financially implemented. Given that employment is a critical pathway out of poverty, the relatively low level of investment highlights a major weakness in addressing long-term economic inclusion.

Civil registration and access to justice recorded expenditures of EUR 92,460, representing one of the lowest-funded areas. Spending was mainly limited to free legal aid services, awareness activities, and institutional cooperation. However, most measures related to civil registration such as birth registration for children born abroad, reimbursement of DNA testing, capacity building of civil registry staff, and consular services showed no reported expenditure. This indicates that despite its fundamental importance for accessing rights and services, this sector remains significantly underfunded and under-implemented.

Anti-Gypsyism is by far the least funded area, with only EUR 11,600 spent in 2024. This is particularly concerning given that anti-Gypsyism is defined in the NAP as a cross-cutting and structural priority. The limited spending was mainly related to a training module developed by the School of Public Administration and a few awareness activities. Most other measures such as integrating anti-Gypsyism into public policies, monitoring discrimination, training justice professionals, and supporting civil society were not implemented financially. This highlights a major disconnect between policy commitments and actual resource allocation.

Overall, the 2024 financial distribution shows a clear imbalance. The majority of funds were concentrated in social protection and, to a lesser extent, health and education. In contrast, sectors that are critical for long-term structural change such as employment, housing, justice, civil registration, and anti-discrimination remain significantly underfunded.

This pattern suggests that the implementation of the NAP in 2024 has largely focused on managing the consequences of social exclusion rather than addressing its root causes. While social protection measures are essential, the lack of sufficient investment in structural reforms limits the potential for sustainable inclusion.

In conclusion, the financial analysis for 2024 reveals a mismatch between the strategic design of the NAP and actual spending patterns. Transformative areas particularly employment, anti-Gypsyism, and access to justice - have not received adequate financial support. Moving forward, especially in the design of the next Action Plan (2026 - 2030), there is a clear need to rebalance investments towards structural measures that promote long-term inclusion, equality, and participation of Roma and Egyptian communities.

Priority Area	Budget Spent
Education + Intercultural Dialogue/Culture	414,549 EUR
Employment	292,121 EUR
Housing	362,253 EUR
Health	687,000 EUR
Civil Registration	92,460 EUR
Social Protection	3,528,924 EUR
Antigypsyism	11,600 EUR

Table 12: Total budget spent for 2024

Source: Line Ministries Reports, 2024

As of the time of reporting, no budgetary data for 2025 are available, making it difficult to assess continuity of funding trends or potential improvements in allocation across strategic priority areas.

10. CONCLUSIONS

The analysis of the 2024–2025 data clearly demonstrates that, despite the existence of a comprehensive policy and legal framework, Roma and Egyptian communities in Albania continue to face deep-rooted structural inequalities across all key sectors, including employment, housing, health, education, civil registration, social protection, and anti-discrimination. While progress is visible in certain areas particularly in the expansion of services, institutional reforms, and increased participation in selected programmes these improvements remain fragmented and insufficient to produce sustainable and transformative change.

Employment remains one of the most critical and unresolved challenges. Although there has been a notable increase in participation in employment promotion programmes and vocational training, these efforts have not translated into stable, long-term labor market integration. The dominance of short-term and low-skilled interventions, especially community public works, continues to define the inclusion model. This approach provides temporary income support but fails to address structural barriers such as low educational attainment, lack of skills, and limited access to formal employment opportunities. As a result, Roma and Egyptian communities remain trapped in a cycle of poverty, informal work, and dependency on social protection schemes.

Housing conditions further illustrate the structural nature of exclusion. While rent subsidies have expanded and provide immediate relief to vulnerable families, they do not offer long-term housing security. At the same time, programmes aimed at sustainable housing solutions, such as low-cost housing and reconstruction, remain limited in scale and inconsistent in implementation. The persistence of informal settlements, lack of basic infrastructure, and cases of forced evictions without adequate safeguards highlight serious human rights concerns. These challenges are compounded by administrative barriers, including lack of documentation and slow legalization processes, which prevent many families from accessing housing programmes.

In the health sector, Albania has made important progress in strengthening the legal framework and expanding service delivery, particularly through preventive care, maternal health services, and mobile medical teams. However, access remains unequal. A significant number of Roma and Egyptian individuals remain uninsured and excluded from the healthcare system due to informal employment, lack of registration, and poverty. Structural barriers such as low health literacy, geographic isolation, and discrimination continue to limit effective utilization of services. While outreach mechanisms like mobile health teams play a critical role, they cannot substitute for systemic inclusion within the healthcare system.

Education presents a similarly mixed picture. While support measures such as free textbooks, transportation, scholarships, and extracurricular programmes have improved access and retention, overall outcomes remain fragile. Dropout rates, although slightly reduced, continue to be high, and reintegration mechanisms remain insufficient. Structural barriers such as poverty, migration, and lack of civil registration continue to disrupt educational continuity. At the same time, systemic gaps persist, including the absence of Roma language education in the formal system, limited inclusion of Roma history and culture in curricula, and weak participation of parents in school governance. These factors contribute to the reproduction of inequalities across generations.

Civil registration remains a fundamental bottleneck that affects access to all other rights. Despite legal and procedural improvements, including digitalization and more flexible registration processes, many Roma and Egyptian individuals continue to face barriers related to documentation, residence registration, and legal identity. These challenges are particularly acute for children, families living in informal settlements, and individuals born abroad. While legal aid services play an important role in addressing these issues, gaps in implementation, funding, and coordination continue to limit their effectiveness.

Social protection continues to function as a critical safety net, but it also reflects the depth of structural vulnerability. High dependence on economic assistance, particularly among women-headed households, indicates limited progress toward active inclusion and sustainable livelihoods. Although the system has been strengthened through digitalization and expansion of services, access remains uneven, and the link between social protection and employment remains weak. The underutilization of targeted support mechanisms, such as the 6% fund, further highlights gaps in reaching the most vulnerable groups.

Finally, antigypsyism remains a cross-cutting and largely unaddressed issue. Despite a strong legal framework, discrimination continues to manifest in everyday life, affecting access to services, employment, and education. Weak institutional response, underreporting of cases, lack of systematic monitoring, and limited awareness of complaint mechanisms contribute to the persistence of discrimination. The absence of dedicated initiatives to monitor hate speech and the limited representation of Roma and Egyptian communities in decision-making processes further reinforce structural exclusion.

Overall, the findings confirm that the main challenge in Albania is not the absence of policies, but the gap between policy commitments and their effective implementation. Across all sectors, there is a recurring pattern: programmes exist, legal frameworks are in place, and some progress is visible, yet structural barriers continue to prevent Roma and Egyptian communities from fully benefiting from these measures.

Moving forward, a fundamental shift is required. Policies must move beyond fragmented interventions and adopt a more integrated, targeted, and rights-based approach. This includes strengthening coordination between sectors, improving data collection and monitoring systems, ensuring sustainable funding, and addressing administrative and structural barriers that exclude the most vulnerable. Particular emphasis should be placed on transitioning from short-term support measures toward long-term solutions that promote stable employment, secure housing, and equal access to quality services.

Equally important is the need to strengthen participation and representation of Roma and Egyptian communities in policy design, implementation, and monitoring processes. Without meaningful inclusion of the communities themselves, policies risk remaining disconnected from real needs and experiences.

In conclusion, while Albania has made measurable efforts toward the inclusion of Roma and Egyptian communities, the pace and depth of change remain insufficient. Without stronger political commitment, institutional accountability, and targeted interventions addressing structural inequalities, the risk is that existing gaps will persist and potentially widen, undermining both national objectives and commitments under European and international frameworks.

11. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the analysis of the 2024–2025 data, it is evident that Albania requires a more targeted, coordinated, and results-oriented approach to ensure the effective inclusion of Roma and Egyptian communities. The following recommendations aim to address structural gaps, improve policy implementation, and ensure that existing frameworks translate into tangible and sustainable outcomes.

A first priority should be strengthening the link between employment policies and sustainable labor market integration. Current employment measures remain heavily concentrated on short-term and low-skilled interventions, particularly community public works. While these programmes provide temporary income, they do not create long-term employment pathways. It is therefore essential to diversify employment programmes by expanding access to vocational training aligned with labor market needs, apprenticeships, and private sector employment opportunities. Special incentives should be introduced for employers to hire Roma and Egyptian jobseekers, including wage subsidies and tax benefits. At the same time, outreach efforts must be significantly improved to ensure that unregistered individuals are brought into the employment system, including through mobile employment services and community mediators.

In parallel, education policies should focus on preventing early dropout and ensuring continuity in schooling. This requires strengthening early identification systems for children at risk, particularly those affected by migration, poverty, or lack of civil registration. Financial support mechanisms such as scholarships, transport, and preschool fee exemptions must be stabilized and expanded. Furthermore, greater investment is needed in inclusive education, including teacher training on diversity and antigypsyism, recruitment of Roma and Egyptian teachers, and integration of Roma history, culture, and language into the national curriculum. Stronger engagement with parents and communities is also essential to improve school participation and retention.

Housing policies must move beyond short-term assistance and prioritize long-term, sustainable solutions. While rent subsidies remain important, they should be complemented by a significant expansion of low-cost housing programmes, social housing stock, and housing reconstruction initiatives. Eligibility criteria for housing programmes should be revised to better reflect the realities of Roma and Egyptian communities, particularly those living in informal settlements or lacking formal documentation. At the same time, the legalization process for informal housing must be accelerated and supported through financial and administrative assistance. Clear safeguards should also be established to prevent forced evictions and ensure access to adequate alternative housing.

In the health sector, improving access to health insurance should be a central priority. Specific measures are needed to facilitate the inclusion of Roma and Egyptian individuals in the health insurance system, particularly those in informal employment or without civil registration. The role of mobile health teams should be expanded and institutionalized, ensuring consistent outreach to marginalized communities. Additionally, the establishment of health mediators is critical for overcoming barriers related to trust, communication, and access to services. Preventive healthcare programmes, including vaccination and health education, should be strengthened through culturally adapted approaches and closer coordination with community actors.

Civil registration remains a cross-cutting issue that requires urgent and sustained attention. Efforts to simplify registration procedures and expand digital services should be complemented by proactive field identification of unregistered individuals, particularly children. Financial barriers, such as the cost of DNA testing, should be addressed through state-funded reimbursement mechanisms. At the same time, inter-institutional coordination must be strengthened to ensure data sharing and follow-up across civil registration, education, health, and social protection systems. Legal aid services should be expanded both geographically and financially to ensure that all vulnerable individuals can access support.

Social protection policies should focus on reducing long-term dependency and promoting active inclusion. While economic assistance remains essential, stronger linkages are needed between social protection, employment, and education systems. Conditional support mechanisms should be better utilized and expanded to reach the most vulnerable families. The underuse of the 6% support fund should be addressed through clearer guidelines, increased awareness, and simplified procedures. At the same time, social services must be strengthened not only in number but also in quality, ensuring effective case management, outreach, and follow-up.

Addressing antigypsyism requires a more systematic and proactive approach. Institutional mechanisms for monitoring discrimination should be strengthened, and data collection on discrimination cases should be improved. Public institutions, including schools, healthcare providers, and local administrations, should receive regular training on equality, diversity, and antigypsyism. Awareness-raising campaigns should be complemented by concrete measures to improve reporting mechanisms and ensure accountability. At the same time, greater support should be provided to civil society organizations working on anti-discrimination and hate speech monitoring.

A cross-cutting recommendation is the need to strengthen governance, coordination, and monitoring mechanisms. The National Roma Contact Point (NRCP) should be reinforced with adequate human and financial resources, as well as a stronger mandate to coordinate across sectors and levels of

government. Data collection systems, including ROMALB, should be further improved to ensure accurate, disaggregated, and timely data. Regular monitoring and evaluation of programmes should be institutionalized, with clear indicators and public reporting.

Finally, meaningful participation of Roma and Egyptian communities must be ensured at all stages of policy development and implementation. This includes strengthening the National Roma Platform, ensuring representation of Roma women and youth, and supporting community-led initiatives. Without active participation, policies risk remaining disconnected from the real needs and experiences of the communities they aim to support.

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