



OPERATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK



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MUNICIPALITY OF TRIKALA

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SECTION 1 - Introduction and context

1.1 General context

In 1924, the city was administratively united with the surrounding settlements, which together constitute the Municipality of Trikala as an autonomous administrative and operational unit. Trikala is a modern city with an excellent street lay-out and many spacious squares. The Municipality consists of the city of Trikala and seven surrounding urban settlements. Trikala covers a total area of 608.48 square kilometers, and according to the latest national population census (May 2011) has 81,355 residents, a number which has significantly grown during the last decades.

The Municipality of Trikala is the biggest of the four Municipalities of Regional Unit of Trikala constituting its largest urban center which gathers all the basic economic, social, cultural and sports infrastructure and activities of the wider region having however and intense agro- pastoral characteristics. In the city of Trikala are various government structures, such as the Courthouse, the General hospital of Trikala, the School Permanent NCO, Higher Education Institutions, public utilities, cultural centers, transport and communications centers, central markets and shops, retail and coarse trade, sports centers recreational and leisure services.

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The permanent population of the Prefecture of Trikala is 131,085 residents while the urban area of Trikala city has a population of 61,700 (Greek Census Bureau, 2011). The regional unit population corresponds to the 1.3% of the total population of the country and to the 18.5% of the total population of Thessaly. If the population growth rate was same as in period 2001-2011 (+1.22%/year), the population of Trikala in 2016 would be: 65,511. However, local authorities estimate the actual population to be nearer 75.000, with approximately 85.000 people moving through the city on a daily basis.

In the category of special population groups including the ROMA, people with disabilities (special needs), homeless and foreigners (mostly coming from Albania, Bulgaria, Romania, Russia, Ukraine) in which are included the statutory financial refugees or immigrants. Recently (August 2016), a reception point (camp) for Syrian refugees was established in the suburban area of the city, with more than 400 people. The total number of persons belonging to these specific groups amounts to 6.44% of the total population of the Municipality of Trikala.

In relation with the economic activity of the Municipality residents a rate of 12.04% is engaged in agriculture, livestock and forestry, 17.31% in activities of



secondary sector and 70,65 % in the tertiary sector (trade, tourism, services).

The per capita GDP for 2012 at Trikala, based on the Hellenic Statistical Service, amounts 11.435,00 €, while the National per capita GDP reaches 17.507,00 €. The GDP of Trikala for the period 2000-2012 showed a continuous increase from year 2000 to year 2009, on which reached its maximum value which was 13.905,00 € for the Regional Unit of Trikala, while the National per capita GDP was 21.642,00 €.

1.2 Key figures and indicators

Social Structures for elderly people

- Homecare for elderly people (10 structures) with 909 beneficiaries.
- Elderly Day Care Center with 25 beneficiaries.
- Elderly Open Protect Structures (14) with 1.244 beneficiaries.

Social Solidarity Structures

- 15 nurseries with more than 516 beneficiaries.
- 1 creative center for disabled children, with 50 beneficiaries.
- 3 children' creative centres, with 687 beneficiaries.

Tackling Poverty Structures

- Social pharmacy.
- Social grocery.
- Social restaurant.
- Homeless daily care centre.
- Social dispensary.

Social Housing Stocks

In the municipality of Trikala there is a structure for homeless hosting, in which 57 people can make their overnight stays, during the nights with bad weather conditions.

Moreover with the Residential Rehabilitation Program, 9 families have been hosted.

Health Related Data

2.500 residents of Trikala City, who belong to social vulnerable groups, have access to the health care system, possessing the relevant health card.

Derelict Land/Brownfield

The arable lands in the Municipality of Trikala are 22.580 Ha. From these 1402.4 Ha, (6,7%) correspond to derelict land/brownfield.



Segregated Neighborhoods

To the administrative boundaries of the Municipality of Trikala, three distinctive areas can be nominated as segregated:

- Seismoplikta
- Kipaki
- Kokkinos Pirgos

1.3 ROMA population in Trikala-Current situation

Within the Municipality of Trikala there are three ROMA settlements while their inhabitants exceed 2.200 people in total (1450 permanent residents and 750 on constant move), making imperative the need of implementation social inclusion programs. Cooperating with governmental bodies the Municipality of Trikala has taken many actions through the years in order to effectively face phenomena such as school dropouts, high unemployment, low educational level and health issues as well as customs like children's marriages.

These three settlements (Pyrgos, Kipaki and Roggia) do not show significant differences among them, and they face, in general, the same problems. Regarding housing, there is lack of elemental accommodation and infrastructure in homes and settlements that leads to impossible spatial expansion of these settlements and phenomena like illegal water and electricity connections.

In terms of Roma employability, the main problems highlighted are the exclusion, the limitation of sectoral activities, the informal working relationships, the lack of work permits, high unemployment, seasonal labor, child labor, exclusion of women in employment and lack of social security.

In education, there are important issues as illiteracy, school dropout, the lack of adequate infrastructure of education and relevant specialist teaching staff, the difficulty of monitoring and assimilation of lessons due to poor knowledge of the Greek language, lack materials and supplies for school, rejection from classmates, parents and some of the teachers and the lack of adaptability.

Finally, with regards to health and insurance, there are high levels of mortality rates, lack of vaccination and information, inability to access the national health system,



increased rates of diseases like hepatitis as well as increased rates of mental disorders, particularly among women.

Based on the Municipal Social Services there are some significant common findings:

- Bad hygiene conditions that lead to health issues (dental problems, lack of vaccination and personal hygiene)
- Lack of basic services such as electricity, drainage system and clean water access in various parts of the settlements
- Lack of infrastructure in terms of housing and common spaces (e.g. playgrounds and new schools)
- High percentage of delinquency
- High percentage of school dropout-more than 50%
- High percentage of illiteracy-more than 60%
- Weakness in terms of skills' development
- Extremely high percentage of unemployment (more than half of the residents are registered as unemployed) a fact that makes them beneficiaries of multiple social benefits on behalf of the Greek state-More than 75%
- Those who do have a job are working as peddlers (in some cases without having the relevant permission by the Municipality)
- High percentage of child labor (in many cases from 10 years old and on)
- High percentage of mobility that decreases the possibilities for social inclusion

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Facing all these issues, Municipality of Trikala is trying to provide all the necessary assistance in order to decrease the social exclusion rates and improve ROMAs' quality of life. Towards this direction the Municipality has designed a "Local Action Plan for ROMA Integration" and currently operates the "Community Center-ROMA Department" which will be analyzed in Section 2 below.



SECTION 2 – Baseline Position

- Action title: Operation of the Community Center-Department for ROMA and other vulnerable groups

In the context of the strategic planning of the Greek State and the Region of Thessaly, in particular, for the creation of a single National Mechanism, which coordinates social inclusion policies, it monitors and evaluates their implementation, identifies priorities according to the needs, in order to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the social protection system, the Municipality of Trikala proceeded to the creation of a Community Center structure with a Department for Roma. This act concerns the operation of the structure for 3 years. The aim is to develop a local benchmark for the reception, service and interconnection of citizens with all the social programs and services implemented in the area of the Municipality of Trikala.

The Center through cross-references interconnects the benefiting individuals - citizens of the municipality of Trikala with individual agencies and services (Municipal services, public services, voluntary organizations, social organizations etc.) to serve their needs.

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The Center also provides services such as counseling on labor market, psychosocial support, educational activities, cultural activities in particular for young people, events with educational and social content, actions for socialization and social inclusion, support for food and commodity distribution and other similar services, in cooperation with the services and bodies of the Municipality or other competent bodies, aiming to improve the standard of living and to ensure the social integration of the beneficiaries, aiming at diagnosing their needs and promoting them in Services, Structures and Programs that currently exist and aiming at social support for their empowerment and integration (OAED, NHS, KIDAP, Home Help, Mental Health Centers, etc.).

This type of Centers are complementary structures that do not replace or substitute the Social Services of Municipalities but broaden the range of social services provided to the beneficiaries as they operate based on the existing system of social policy of the Municipality, operating supportively and under the supervision of the competent Directorate of the Municipality of Trikala.



The beneficiary during his / her visit to the CC will ask his / her questions to the person in charge of the center, be informed by the relevant official about social policy issues concerning him / her, and accordingly be referred. More specifically, during his first visit, his electronic dossier will be created where his data will be recorded. After that, its course will be monitored through indicators.

The main deliverable of the action is the beneficiary's population of the intervention area, which will be recorded in the system and the monitoring of this information in the form of indicators (quantitative and qualitative). These data will be aggregated in monthly and annual reports. In addition, the information material for all the actions of the municipality that are social in nature is also considered as a deliverable.

More specifically, besides the above, other deliverables are the following:

- Daily entry logs in the structure (total incoming regardless of whether they are beneficial or not).
- Individual executives' reports to provide services and products to recipients, with a separate reference to references to CCs or other structures.
- Forms and digital material of meetings - networking partnerships, with details of the participants, date, agenda, agreement documents, etc., depending on the type of action.
- Print and digital material from publicity actions (photos, invitations, brochures, lists of recipients, lists of participants, distributed material, etc. depending on the type of action).
- Material produced by members of the structure.
- Monthly Structure Report.
- Contracts, deliverables, etc. (where project / service contracts are concluded).

The aim is to develop a local benchmark for the reception, service and interconnection of citizens with all the social programs and services implemented in the area of the Municipality of Trikala.

The Community Center with its Roma branch is supervised by the Social Service of the Municipality and provides the following services:

- A) Reception - Update - Support for citizens
- B) Cooperation with Services and Structures



C) Provision of Services aiming at improving the standard of living and ensuring the social integration of the beneficiaries.

The Center through cross-references interconnects the beneficiaries - citizens of the municipality of Trikala with individual agencies and services (local administration services, public services, voluntary organizations, social organizations etc.) to serve their needs.

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An estimation of 800 ROMA from all three settlements will be benefited by services such as employment consulting, mental/social counseling, educational and cultural activities, and distribution of food, clothing and pharmaceutical products in order to improve their quality of life



The size of such project requires the participation and collaboration of multiple stakeholders, other than the Municipality of Trikala which will be the owner of the action. To name a few:

- ✓ The Directorate of Social Welfare & Solidarity
- ✓ The Municipal Development Agency, e-Trikala S.A.
- ✓ Sineirmos Non Profit Organization (responsible institution for the social structures to tackle
- ✓ poverty)
- ✓ The NGO “Prasini Kivotos”
- ✓ The Municipal Volunteers Group
- ✓ Social Enterprises
- ✓ Social security funds
- ✓ Labor force employment organization
- ✓ National health system
- ✓ National educational system

The action above is operational since 2017 by the Municipality of Trikala, for a total funding of 180.000,00 with great success and will continue as long as there are available ERDF funding for this Programming Period

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- Action title: Local Action Plan for Roma Social Inclusion in the Municipality of Trikala

Since 2011 the European Commission has launched the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies (<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52015DC0299&from=EN>) up to 2020 which has been endorsed by the Council and the European Council. The EU's Europe 2020 strategy for a new growth path – smart, sustainable and inclusive growth – leaves no room for the persistent economic and social marginalization of what constitutes Europe's largest minority (more than 10 millions), therefore determined action, in active dialogue with the Roma, is needed both at national and EU level.

While primary responsibility for that action rests with public authorities, it remains a challenge given that the social and economic integration of Roma is a two-way process which requires a change of mindsets of the majority of the people as well as of members of the Roma communities. First of all, Member States need to ensure that Roma are not discriminated against but treated like any other EU citizens with equal access to all fundamental rights as enshrined in the EU Charter of Fundamental



Rights. In addition, action is needed to break the vicious cycle of poverty moving from one generation to the next.

In many Member States, Roma represent a significant and growing proportion of the school age population and therefore the future workforce. The Roma population is young: 35.7% are under 15 compared to 15.7% of the EU population overall. The average age is 25 among Roma, compared with 40 across the EU. The vast majority of working-age Roma lack the education needed to find good jobs. It is therefore of crucial importance to invest in the education of Roma children to allow them later on to successfully entering the labor market. In Member States with significant Roma populations, this already has an economic impact.

Based on the above in 2011 Greece adopted a national strategic framework for Roma (https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/greece_national_strategy_en.pdf). It addresses the key areas of education, employment, healthcare and housing. It also foresees a territorial approach with four main geographical regions where the largest number of the Roma population are concentrated, namely Eastern Macedonia – Thrace, Western Greece, Central Macedonia and Thessaly. Finally its primary objective is to end the social exclusion of the Roma and to create the necessary conditions for the social integration of Roma individuals, whether Greeks or foreigners residing lawfully in Greece. The aforesaid strategic objective is to be served via three individual general objectives, as follows:

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- A. Guaranteed provision of housing
- B. Development of complex of social intervention support services (in the areas of employment, education, health and social integration)
- C. Development of social dialogue and consensus, through social emancipation and participation of the Roma themselves.

The Action Plan for Roma Social Inclusion in the Municipality of Trikala has been officially submitted at the Special Secretariat for Social Integration of ROMA which operates under the Hellenic Ministry of Employment, Social Security and Social Solidarity, in order to be granted and its actions to be funded. Its overall aim is to provide solutions that will help the ROMA people within Trikala to be fully integrated and in the same manner to improve their accessibility in fundamental services like health, education, employment and housing and basic infrastructure



It includes 4 axes:

- Axes1:Housing and basic infrastructures
- Axes2: Promotion in employment and vocational training
- Axes 3:Education
- Axes 4:Medical-social care

The objectives of the action plan are:

1. To provide the necessary infrastructure in order to improve the citizens' daily life, especially for the children: this objective mainly refers at the improvement and/or establishment of new facilities (common areas, housing etc) that can improve the group's quality of daily life. Some examples are schools, playgrounds and houses
2. To address some of the main problems that the target group faces (health and mental support, care for young children etc): Besides investment in infrastructure, ROMA people need assistance in basic healthcare services such as vaccination for children, gynecological examinations, psychological support. It is a very important factor for the level of success in ROMA integration within local society and in some cases, its absence could be crucial for people's health (for instance the reappearance of forgotten deceases like measles
3. To reduce social exclusion and increase the ROMA integration within the city of Trikala: as mentioned at the previous Objective, the Municipality of Trikala acts in order to increase their level of integration within the local society and consequently plans to bring together different cultural aspects through local festivals, events, seminars and workshops. These actions will help distinguish the barriers and reduce isolation and discrimination
4. To increase ROMA access to education, knowledge and employment: some of the major problems occurred are the lack of integration to education and knowledge (high percentage of school dropouts) and employment (phenomena such as "black labor" and lack of social insurance are very common). On the other hand, these issues cannot be solved at once and without the collaboration with other relevant public organizations. Therefore our aim is to increase the level of collaboration with the Ministries and other bodies so we can provide a concrete and comprehensive solution for these people
5. To increase ROMA access to public services: Public administration in Greece is often very complicated for the citizens that wish to make transactions with it. It becomes an ever bigger obstacle for the majority of ROMA people since they are constantly on the move and face difficulties in reading, writing and/or having



limited internet access. Municipality's goal is to help them through the provision of services such as counseling with their transactions with the Greek State so they can be easier and quicker integrated by having the same rights and obligations like the rest of population

SECTION 3 – Implementation

- Action title: Operation of the Community Center-Department for ROMA and other vulnerable groups

From 2003 until 2015 a Medical Social-Center operated in providing medical services (children dental care and gynecological tests) and education concerning both of them as a key-enabler to their social inclusion. The Municipality of Trikala was the owner of the action and collaborated with other local stakeholders like the Roma Support Center and Vulnerable Groups "VOYAGERS" and the ROMA Care Center that acted as intermediaries in identifying cases that need attention and assisting in finding solutions

Consequently, there was already a ULG set up than had the knowledge and capacity to efficiently design the Community Center-ROMA Department action and fully implement it. There were constant meetings among the relevant Municipal departments as well as the ROMA representatives in order to submit the proposal for funding from the ERDF Managing Authority of Thessaly.

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For its operation, the Department of ROMA is located in Kipaki settlement in order to support inhabitants efficiently, acting as an intermediary between ROMA people and various social services. The Center's activities are evaluated on a monthly basis from the Municipality of Trikala and the Region of Thessaly, which is responsible for the funding

- Action title: Local Action Plan for Roma Social Inclusion in the Municipality of Trikala

The Municipality of Trikala in 2017 designed and submitted for granting to the Hellenic Special Secretariat of ROMA Social Integration the "Local Action Plan for Roma Social Inclusion in the Municipality of Trikala". The Municipality worked in close collaboration with the ROMA people, through their representatives, and now has the overall monitoring, while the Municipality's relevant departments (Programming, Finance and Technical Services) are responsible for the accurate and comprehensive implementation. For the first time it was managed to gather all



information in a single action plan and identify the actions to be implemented for ROMA people's benefit. It was divided into the following areas of intervention:

- Housing and basic infrastructure
- Education
- Health
- Employment
- Horizontal activities

Therefore and for this plan, several Municipal departments collaborated (Programming, Social Services, Financing and Technical Services among others) with the ROMA representatives and the relevant Hellenic Special Secretariat of ROMA Social Integration. Also several stakeholders such as social enterprises and NGOs were called to provide knowledge and suggestions.

SECTION 4 – Learning Journey

During the design and implementation of the two actions described above, several lessons were learned :

Overall lessons :

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1. Firstly, the first major question was how can we adjust our local situation within the UrRBInclusion context and take advantage of the benefits and good practices that will occur, despite all the legal and bureaucratic obstacles in Greece.
2. Secondly, the lack of efficient and measurable activities to be demonstrated, besides those two already included here, narrowed the number of possible solutions to the beneficiaries.
3. However, the participation of the ROMA people, through their representatives, during all stages was significant and produced useful solutions to daily problems these beneficiaries face. All involved parties had the opportunity to provide suggestions on a realistic basis and adjust their needs and expectations to a logical level. This participatory process is constant and gives the opportunity to be more flexible and therefore efficient.
4. One major lesson learned from other cities, is to invite and include stakeholders, other than the beneficiaries themselves, who can provide a wider perspective of an issue and help with possible solutions



5. In addition, the variety of solutions provided in some cities, for example housing for those in great need, may not be applicable now but it could be an asset for future activities as a possible solution.
6. It usually takes many ULG meetings in order to help stakeholders change their view of perspective on an issue and move from the personal interest to the wider benefit.
7. One common problem is to help stakeholders not to lose their interest on the topic and always bring something new to the meetings.
8. Finally, the over-dependence on ERDF funding for the implementation of actions and provision of services might be helpful but it is also restricted and works as an obstacle in many occasions.

Community Center-ROMA Department :

1. Since the function is located in Kipaki settlement, it is accessible to the vast majority of the beneficiaries and they feel it as part of their daily activities
2. The development of a more personal interaction, gives the social workers the chance to intervene directly and motivate the beneficiaries to be more active and take advantage of the services provided
3. From their perspective, the social workers organise various activities and events in order to inform the beneficiaries on several issues and the level of participation is quite satisfactory
4. Finally, issues like under aged marriages and school drop out have been reduced, which is considered as a major step towards their integration

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Local Action Plan for Roma Social Inclusion in the Municipality of Trikala :

1. For the first time it was managed to gather all information in a single action plan and identify the actions to be implemented for ROMA people's benefit
2. The interventions analyzed within the plan have a long term approach and try to achieve the ROMA integration in a holistic manner.
3. In terms of gathering needs and data, it is considered a very important piece of work. This plan is actually a roadmap for the ROMA integration within the city of Trikala and can become the basis of actions in the next decades. Also these actions are accompanied with important information such as studies, research, on site visits and initial budgeting.
4. However and no matter how many projects have been described and are about to be funded, there are several others interventions that need to be done



Future/Next Steps :

Through our participation in URBinclusion we've learned to be more open-minded to new ideas, search for solutions in places we didn't know they've exist and engage more stakeholders as possible. In addition we believe that we are part of a solid network of cities that have the capacity and will to help each other, by providing ideas to several issues.

In addition the tools used throughout this period, can be very efficient in further actions that Trikala will design in order to gain the best possible outcome. Finally and even though it is not up to Trikala to change it, we intend to do everything possible in order to overcome bureaucratic procedures when it comes to the relief of excluded groups of people.



URBinclusion

*Combating poverty
in deprived urban areas*



