

Terms of Reference

Title: Consultant – Roma Inclusion (full-time, office-based)

Reports to: UNICEF Representative

Duration: 15 August – 30 July 2023

Duty Station: Bucharest, Romania

Contract Type: Individual consultancy

I. Background

The Roma are one of Europe's largest and most disadvantaged ethnic minority groups. While some have overcome, millions live in slums and lack access to the basic services they need, from healthcare and education to electricity and clean water. Discrimination against Roma communities is commonplace, fueling their exclusion. Far from spurring support for their social inclusion, their poverty and poor living conditions often reinforce the stereotyped views of policymakers and the public. And far from receiving the support that is their right, Roma children face discrimination that denies them the essentials for a safe, healthy, educated and protected childhood.

There is a general absence of adequate information and quality data on Roma populations in Romania relating to topics key to the rights of the child, including education, health and nutrition, and living conditions, resulting to Roma children being particularly vulnerable as they too often remain out of sight of the authorities. Roma settlements are often isolated on the outskirts of villages and towns, and with poor housing, sanitation and hygiene conditions, and Roma communities face multiple and inter-related segregation, educational deprivation, forced evictions and systemic discrimination, leading to poverty and exclusion.

When it comes to education, significant disparities are apparent across all ages. Only 3% of Roma children under 3 are enrolled in crèche/kindergarten compared to 22% of non-Roma children. For the age group 3-6 years, 39% of Roma children are enrolled in crèche/kindergarten compared to 86% of non-Roma. For the age group over 6 years old, 81.5% of Roma children are enrolled in school compared to 99.2% of non-Roma. There are also consistent inequities between Roma and non-Roma children in terms of learning outcomes and scores on critical competencies. Further, among the estimated 400,000 children that are out of school (2016), Roma children are overrepresented. Finally, Roma children are six times more likely than other children not to complete secondary education. We see similar trends in other areas of child rights, such as health, protection and participation.

In 2019, the EU adopted a resolution on a Strategic Framework for National Roma Inclusion Strategies. This has been followed by the development of a survey in 2020, led by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, to collect and compare data in eight EU member states (and two accession countries). The survey collects information about Roma socio-economic conditions and their experiences of discrimination, harassment and violence, including those motivated by racism, and serve as a baseline for the post-2020 inclusion agenda. More recently, the European Commission adopted a EU Roma strategic framework for equality, inclusion and participation 2020-2030, a new 10-year plan, including a proposal for a Council Recommendation, to support Roma in the EU, for the next 10 years. With this framework in place, all EU governments started (or continued) to develop strong national Roma strategic frameworks.

The Government of Romania has made steps to address the needs of the Roma population through the National Strategy on Roma Inclusion (2022-2027). It is supported by the following six specific objectives:

1. Improving living conditions for members of vulnerable communities with Roma
2. Ensuring access to quality inclusive education for Romanian Roma citizens

3. Increase the employment rate of Roma in line with market requirements in view of their professional development
4. Improving the health status of members of vulnerable communities with Roma
5. Supporting research, conservation and promotion of Roma cultural heritage and cultural identity
6. Combating discrimination, anti-Gypsyism and anti-Gypsyism generating hate speech or hate crime.

However, policies initiated and implemented tend to be generic and fail to adequately distinguish between the large socio-economic differences present, and the diversity of the targeted populations.

UNICEF's global commitment to equity – giving a fair chance in life to every child, everywhere, especially the most disadvantaged – is built on the conviction that it is right in principle and evidence that it is right in practice. In Romania, UNICEF focusses on the most vulnerable children – which include Roma girls and boys – across its programmes, communication and advocacy, with the aim to leverage their social inclusion.

UNICEF is guided by the Convention on the Rights of the Child and strives to establish children's rights as enduring ethical principles and international standards of behaviour towards children.

II. Purpose and Objective

As part of a widened mandate UNICEF Romania is seeking to strengthen its programing towards Roma children within its reach through identifying opportunities and action, as well as to support relevant National and Local authorities in the development of an effective policy framework and in the design of appropriate responses for ensuring the full realization of the rights of Roma children.

III. Scope of work

With a view of improving understanding of the needs and vulnerabilities of Roma children in Romania, supporting state actors in the design of adequate policies and programming, and strengthening the effectiveness of UNICEF support to this population group, the Consultant - Roma Inclusion will undertake the following key tasks:

- Support the UNICEF CO in **providing inputs and feed-back to critical policy and programming documents** to reflect the required focus for Roma children, including in:
 - UNICEF Country Programme 2023-2027 and other specific UNICEF programmes and plans, including annual workplans and advocacy plans
 - National strategies and programmes, such as for Child Rights, Health, Education, Roma Inclusion etc.
 - Relevant EU operational programmes, Child Guarantee process, EU Semester and EU Country Specific Recommendations
 - UNICEF's internal knowledge production outputs (including research instruments, policy briefs, reports, etc.)
- **Support UNICEF Child Rights Monitoring and related research and data collection** with the aim to:
 - Better reflect Roma children situation in all ongoing UNICEF programmes
 - Ensure that evidence-generation processes initiated by UNICEF by making sure that situation of Roma children is included, and data collected are disaggregated by Roma and non-Roma.
 - Advocate for improved data collection on Roma children at National level, including for conducting a Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) in Romania.
- Support strengthening the **Roma inclusion in the Romania for Every Child initiative**:
 - As part of the M&E and Learning framework, assist in the identification of indicators that measure results in Roma inclusion over the modeling period
 - Identify and support to resolving bottlenecks to access to MPS and ICC services

- Contribute mainstreaming Roma children's issues into the local municipal action plans, as well as in the education component of the Initiative
- Support the UNICEF Communications team **with anti-discrimination campaign and strategies to promote diversity and Roma inclusion in UNICEF communication assets**, such as the UNICEF website, FB posts, publications, etc.
- **Advise and support UNICEF Specialists on:**
 - Strengthening concrete and measurable inclusion of Roma children in all UNICEF's work
 - Possible new partnerships with Roma institutions and NGOs in all areas of UNICEF work
 - Development and dissemination of appropriate position papers/ policy briefs on Roma children's situation in education to be used for TA and advocacy efforts
 - Ongoing work on desegregation work, focusing on Roma desegregation angle
 - The identification and dissemination of materials that are promoting Roma history, identity and culture and could be promoted by UNICEF as auxiliary didactic materials
 - Ways to ensure Roma children's participation into the consultative mechanisms of children established at National and local levels, including the Romanian Children's Board and Municipal Children's Councils as part of CFCL.
 - Organizing focus group discussions with Roma adolescents on selected themes
 - The validation and distribution of Health Information and Promotion materials for Roma population/ professionals
 - Collecting good practices on Roma children's inclusion
 - Supporting the Refugee Response team on Ukrainian Roma refugees
 - Communication on existing partnerships with Roma stakeholders
 - Attending Roma related meetings organized by different working groups UNICEF is part of
- Support the Country Management Team to strengthen diversity and inclusion in the UNICEF team, such as through:
 - Organize a series of discussions with UNICEF staff, UNICEF contractors and UNICEF partners around diversity and inclusion from a Roma perspective
 - Participating in all staff meetings, trainings and working groups on Diversity and Inclusion.
 - Advising Human Resources on better strategies for promoting Roma inclusion in UNICEF
 - Maintaining an internal communication on Roma policy and programmatic developments at the European, regional, national and CO level

IV. Time frame and deliverables

Based on the above tasks, the consultant will deliver the following:

Deliverable (to be finalized with supervisor)	Rough timeline
Brief monthly reports regarding progress against the tasks above	monthly
Inclusion of Roma specific indicators in CPD and Romania 4 Every Child	By September 2022
Develop a strategy and action plan for enhancing staff diversity and inclusion in UNICEF Romania (as part of the office working group being established)	By October 2022
Roma inclusion newsletter	Quarterly

Time frame: 11.5 months starting 15 August 2022 and completion date 30 July 2023.

V. Minimum qualifications and competencies

- Advanced university degree in social sciences or relevant areas;

- At least 5 years of professional work experience in social policy, children's rights, minority rights, child protection and/or education in Romania, including in the provision of policy advice in the relevant areas;
- In-depth understanding of Roma issues and underlying factors for their social exclusion in the country;
- Excellent writing skills;
- Excellent analytical, communication and negotiating skills;
- Experience in Roma related research, advocacy and influencing;
- Excellent team working skills and respect for diversity;
- Computer skills, including various office applications;
- Knowledge of Romani language;
- Fluency in Romanian and in English (written and oral).

VI. Duty Station, Workplace and Travel

Work location can be discussed but will be a mix between in-office work, working-from home and field missions, as required.

VII. Important notes:

UNICEF is committed to diversity and inclusion within its workforce, and encourages all candidates, irrespective of gender, race, sexual orientation, nationality, culture, appearance, socio-economic status, ability, age, religious, and ethnic backgrounds, to apply to become a part of the organization.

For this position, suitable Roma candidates will receive preferential consideration and selection, as long as they meet the eligibility requirements in the advertisement.

UNICEF has a zero-tolerance policy on conduct that is incompatible with the aims and objectives of the United Nations and UNICEF, including sexual exploitation and abuse, sexual harassment, abuse of authority and discrimination. UNICEF also adheres to strict child safeguarding principles. All selected candidates will, therefore, undergo rigorous reference and background checks, and will be expected to adhere to these standards and principles.