

ESF in Rome: supporting Roma families to access basic services

Approach

Rome is leading projects co-financed by the ESF with a total budget of more than €20 million. In particular, the national operational programmes NOP Inclusion and NOP Metropolitan Cities - that combine different EU funds, in particular ESF and ERDF funding - support interventions and services for social inclusion, combat poverty, promote integration pathways and job inclusion. These actions include the Roma Plan described below.

Initiative implemented

About 4,500 Roma people live in Rome in temporary dwellings (encampments). They receive welfare benefits under the form of free basic housing and utilities. These services are so far provided for free, regardless of the residents' contributing capacity and their eligibility. The city council of Rome decided in 2016 to support the integration of Roma people, in particular by facilitating their access to housing, employment, healthcare and education with the ultimate aim to close the encampments in which they currently live.

Rome adopted a Roma Plan in May 2017. The Plan aims to support Roma people to leave the encampments and integrate into the labour market and in society by improving their access to education, employment, housing and healthcare. The Roma Plan includes actions for labour market activation, professional training and services for (social) housing. The plan sets to:

- map and do a census of the Roma people living in encampments
- gradually close down the encampments
- support the housing inclusion of the Roma community
- promote the inclusion of Roma people into the local labour market
- facilitate the access of Roma people to education and healthcare

The Roma Plan of Rome is an integrated project requiring institutional collaboration between different local services and different organisations working on social integration on the ground. The project will be gradually implemented, starting with the closing of the encampments of Monachina and Barbuta during the period of 2018-2021. The intervention is co-financed from the multi-fund NOP Metropolitan Cities with a budget of €3.8 million. Additional funding is made available from the city's budget from the resources initially earmarked to maintain the camps that will be used to support Roma inclusion in employment and housing.

To benefit from the support foreseen for them under this plan, Roma families must sign an agreement with the city, which sets out their rights and obligations. This agreement defines the commitment between the Roma beneficiaries and the city of Rome, and requires to individuals and families to actively take part to the plan's activities, including vocational training, job inclusion, support to rent, compulsory schooling of children, compliance with the law. These conditions must be fulfilled to be eligible for support from the Roma Plan.

Results and impact

The plan aims to support the integration of 2,000 Roma people. The expected results are:

- the gradual closure of the encampments
- the prevention of the formation of new informal dwellings
- an increase in the capacity of local institutions to implement inclusive policies for Roma

Given the recent start of the Roma Plan, the results will only be visible in a few years.

Added value

Thanks to the support from ESF, Rome was able to pilot some innovations in its new Roma plan, such as a participatory approach to involve Roma in defining their pathways for social inclusion, and an integrated approach to link up local services and local partners involved in the actions.

Website: website: http://www.comune.roma.it/pcr/it/uff_spec_rom_sinti_caminanti.page