



Annual Progress Report

Annual Progress Report No.: 2

Contract Number: 8285-00/2015
Title of the Intervention: For Active Inclusion & Rights of Roma Women in the Western Balkans (FAIR II) Förderung der sozialen Einbeziehung & Rechte von Romafrauen am Westbalkan
Project Period: 1.11.2015-31.10.2018

Reporting period:

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The answer to all questions must cover the reporting period as specified above. The report must be completed and signed by the contact person of the Contractor. The information provided in this technical report must correspond to the financial information provided in the financial report. Please expand the paragraphs as necessary.

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Summary of the progress of the intervention

Inception phase: The three main project partners submitted their project proposals according to which institutional grant contracts were signed and financial support allocated; reporting forms and monitoring tables for tracking main indicators were shared with the partners.

Fourteen Roma and non-Roma organizations are included in FAIR II project from all three project countries as members of national coalitions participated at a workshop held in Ruma in March, 2016, aiming to discuss the project (impact and the best possible options in achieving them). The same workshop was used to introduce **impact measurement tools**; the community score card (CSC) and the most significant change methods (MSC) as well as other important documents regarding compliance of reporting and implementation.

The Baseline study has been finalized, the data collected and processed internally by CARE with the following findings. It is expected that Roma women and girls end up being more empowered to exercise their rights to education, health and to a life free of violence through targeted community-level assistance. Through small grants/community level actions partners will work in 17 schools with more than 10,000 students, with over 1,800 or 17% being Roma. In addition, there are 30 Roma/Egyptian women identified and included into activities focused on finishing education and/or learning a useful skill that would increase their employability options and chances. At a total of 12 locations in all three target countries, where approximately 5,800 Roma women and girls live, almost 800 or about 15% will be reached through series of awareness raising and educational workshops on changing attitudes and practices towards general health and in particular reproductive health. The rights and access as well as the quality of service provision in the areas of education and health will be addressed as well as the rooted discriminatory attitudes of government institutions and professionals interpreted as 'tradition' through improved communication and mutual understanding.

Further, at 19 locations Roma adult and young men are being targeted in different ways and engaged in learning about all types of violence, health consequences of violence, gender equality and new, healthier and more functional attitudes and behaviors. The targeted locations are home to 6,400 Roma men; about 1,500 of them will be included into project interventions or 23% of the total male population (adults and youth). The project has already engaged 34 peer-educators and nine mediators have assumed their roles to assist the partners with the community level work.

A total of 22 representatives make up Coalitions in the three project countries, committed to improve policies and awareness on needs and challenges Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities are facing, presenting a mix of Roma women/Roma and non-Roma CSOs, individual representatives, Roma women networks and government representatives. Furthermore, partner organizations take part in 15 inter-sectoral CSO or government lead groups addressing the project related issues at certain localities while there are 19 partner representatives sitting in 42 local and national-level advisory, policy or decision-making bodies.

CARE and partners should continue strengthening the regional exchange and learning among project countries, partners and other stakeholders as well as focus more directly to exploring the relevant European level events, networking options and partnership that might contribute to the project's overall impact in the region, *for more information please see Annex 4.*

ER1: Roma women and girls are empowered to exercise their rights to education, health and to life free of violence through targeted community-level assistance;

Seven organizations were awarded sub-grants under ER1 and they will implement the projects in collaboration with five other coalition/network members **in 12 localities** reaching and impacting Roma men, women, children and youth making positive changes and improving their lives in the field of **education, health, legal and social assistance.**

All organizations have included in their activities Roma peer educators which will have easier and a more open approach to Roma and non-Roma youth questioning and improving their atti-

tudes/behaviour towards health, women and gender based violence. Depending on possibilities peer educators will work in schools and/or Roma communities.

26 young Roma men and women (8 girls and 18 boys) have been educated on peer education through two workshops organized by CARE. A four-day workshop was organized in September 2016 for 18 Roma boys and girls in synergy with local organizations included in the YMI project as they are experienced in training young peer educators using Y methodology. Later, as per request of the project partners and peer educators who took part in the first workshop, an additional three-day workshop was organized in Montenegro.

To act as bridges in these communities **9 Roma mediators** have been engaged in our 11 target localities (ER1). CARE organized trainings for 15 individuals to be able to approach a bigger pool of applicants. They have been employed by the project's three main partner organizations as of September 1 2016, for a period of 22 months, until June 30, 2018 being at service at Roma population bridging the gap between institutions and Roma population living in 46 Roma communities in 12 targeted locations in three respective countries providing 1.044 assistances to 1.520 persons. Mediators have connected with already present health or educational Assistants or Mediators.

ER 2: Local inter-sectoral coordination mechanisms involving CSO and institutional stakeholders are established and strengthened to support the social inclusion of Roma communities;

An initial assessment was made to track the status quo on the extent of coordination on the local level¹. The assessment first indicated that in some cases the local authorities had to be convinced of the advantages of participating in the local coordination mechanisms, but the project works towards strengthening the cooperation and if feasible formalizing it. In Montenegro six Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) have been already signed with local authorities and in BiH the process has been initiated.

The intersectoral commissions have not been active during July - August 2016 as that was the period of vacations and during September 2016 the campaign process for the election has been initiated and many of the public institutions regular activities were slowed down.

Not only our main project partners have continued their advocacy efforts and involvement in development of policy documents in their countries that have the potential to affect the lives of RAE communities. In Bosnia and Herzegovina four local Action Plans have been developed through CARE's EU funded project „Active Participation of Roma Inclusion“. The process of election of new members of the Roma Board has been finalized in 2016. New members have been elected but the selection procedure did not comply with the minimal number of women represented in the Board, whereby 2 Roma women are members of the Board.

Serbia and Montenegro adopted Strategies for Social Inclusion of Roma starting with 2016. The implementation of this document in the Republic of Serbia will be slow for this year since the Action plan for implementation of the Strategy has not yet been adopted due to national and local elections which have been held in April 2016, but the government has been constituted in August 2016. During the period March 2016 – September 2016 institutional representatives were almost unavailable for cooperation.

Other strategic documents, (Serbia: Strategy for Gender Equality and Action Plan (AP) for 2016-2017, LAP in Kruševac and Lazarevac, AP for negotiation chapter 23 for EU integration) both on local and national level, have been developed and adopted and project or coalition organizations were included in their development.

¹ The following towns were covered: Nikšić, Podgorica and Berane (Montenegro); Visoko, Bijeljina, Prnjavor and Tuzla (BiH); Šabac, Kruševac, Požarevac and Belgrade with four municipalities (Čukarica, Zemun, Zvezdara i Lazarevac) in Serbia.

ER3: Apart from their engagement in the development of strategic policy documents, our coalition partners are activist organizations engaged in raising awareness through different activities throughout the year. During this reporting period they were actively involved in the **Month of Roma Women Activism**, which is a very important period for the organizations, during which they organize marches, meetings, workshops, street actions etc.

The assessment of national networks/coalitions of Roma and non-Roma organisations was finalized by external experts. Strategic and action plans have been created. CARE supported this process through workshops organized in B&H and Serbia.

ER4: Targeted Roma women organizations are strengthened to become active players in networking on regional and European level with Roma and non-Roma peer organizations and relevant institutions.

CARE introduced two new participatory M&E methods; the **Community Score Card (CSC)** and the **Most Significant Change Methods (MSC)** which enable the participation of projects' target groups and stakeholders to monitor and provide feedback on progress, changes and results based on qualitative data.

Project partners continuously get involved with other donors, international organizations passing on their experiences and speaking about position of Roma in their respective countries. For further sharing of experiences and bringing the FAIR agenda on the European level, the Roma women network Phenjelipe was approached for cooperation; building upon this in the following period these activities will be intensified. In terms of the project's visibility, promotional materials has been developed and distributed to the organizations and project's details and activities are known to the public through CARE's webpage.

CARE and partners participated in the meetings and conferences at which contacts were established with representatives of the Council of Europe and the EU in the context of the planned study visit either to Brussels or Strasbourg in 2017 and 2018.

Detailed description of the project progress

Initial phase of the project

Through FAIR I Coalitions were established with other Roma and non – Roma organizations in order to jointly advocate for the rights of the Roma and Egyptian communities and to join forces to mainstream this mission towards the majority population. At the strategic workshop some revisions were made in light of the past lessons learned, so with our partners we agreed that following structures will continue under this action (*for details please see Table 1*):

B&H: To avoid parallel informal coalitions/networks Better Future in cooperation with other previous coalition members has decided to implement FAIR II through Women Roma Network "Success" and to include non-Roma organizations into the activities and efforts.

Serbia: Based on the areas of engagement of FAIR II project, the Serbian coalition consists of 4 organizations, including BIBIJA. They are active in areas of education, health and prevention of violence against women in families and partner relationships.

Montenegro: Coalition members recognized a need for bigger involvement of public institutions, thus the coalition is now expanded to include also representatives of Institute for Public Health.

Table 1: Overview of CBOs forming Coalition/Network supported by FAIR II

Country	Local partner in lead	Coalition member Roma CSO - locality	Coalition member Non-Roma CSO/Public Institution
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Better Future	“Better future” - Tuzla	Citizens Association for the Promotion of Education of Roma OTAHARIN - Bjeljina
		“Roma girl” - Prnjavor	Foundation CURE - Sarajevo
		Center for Mothers “Hope” - Kakanj	
		Center for Mothers “Consolation” - Zenica	
		“Roma Youth” - Vitez	
		Youth Roma Initiative “Be My Friend” - Visoko	
		Snježana Vasić - Sarajevo	
		HavaRamić - Bosanska Krupa	
Montenegro	Center for Roma Initiatives	Center for Roma Initiatives - Nikšić	Police Department - Nikšić
		Women REA Network FIRST - Podgorica - Nikšić – Berane – Ulcinj – Herceg Novi	Center for Social Work - Nikšić
		NGO Rose - Berane	Institute for Public Health - Podgorica
			MNE Women’s Lobby - Podgorica
Serbia	Bibija	Bibija - Belgrade	Law Scanner - Belgrade
		Romani cikna - Kruševac	
		Roma Women's Center VelikiCrljeni - Lazarevac	

Note: In B&H in order to avoid duplication of structures Roma Women Network will be used/supported with some joint non-Roma organizations

Output 1: Roma women and girls are empowered to exercise their rights to education, health and to life free of violence through targeted community-level assistance;

Field level activities prepared in the framework of a comprehensive sub-granting scheme: CARE granted 7 field level sub-grants to experienced CSOs that proved successful in achieving lasting results for Roma children, women and men and will be supported by CARE and our main coordinating partners in each country. During the preparation process of the project proposals, the main project partners have supported the coalition/network partners.

For instance, **6 meetings** have been held within the coalition of **Serbia and 3 meetings of Montenegrin coalition** during which all joint activities have been agreed upon with provision of assistance to coalition partners. In **BiH**, apart from **9 meetings** held, Better Future also promotes events of other network organizations on the network’s web page for which Better Future is the host.

Regional four-day training was organized in September 2016 where 18 peer educators (15 M and 3 F) were trained, 6 per each project country plus the project coordinators from each country. A synergy between the FAIR and the YMI project could be achieved, as the activity was held by trainers from the YMI project who utilized the Y methodology. The need for additional trainings for peer educators from Montenegro was identified and therefore were organized and resulted in 26 trained and educated peer educators (6 from BiH, 6 from Serbia and 14 from Montenegro). In February 2017 additional trainings for the BiH peer educator’s team will be organized.

In this reporting period **in two countries peer educators held 17 workshops reaching out to 297 boys and girls (228 boys and 69 girls)**. In **Serbia** peer educators organized 7 workshops in one high school and one primary school fighting against prejudice and bullying reaching out to 46 boys and 69 girls. In **Montenegro** the project foresaw peer to peer education to take place in schools, but during the project implementation and preparation of such activity the project team realized that peer to peer education has to be relocated to Roma/Egyptian communities as the Ministry of Education approves and allows only licensed peer educators to have activities in schools, thus organized **10 peer to peer educations** in Roma communities (three in Nikšić, four in Podgorica and three in Berane) **reaching out to 182 Roma boys aged between 15-28**. During the two hour workshops, peer educators focused on gender, sex and gender based violence discussions and they revealed that the general opinion of their peers is, that women should be good and obedient, good mothers and housewives, bearing children with no need to be educated (3rd grade education at maximum), with no freedom to move freely except with family members. Most of the participants would like their wives to be employed so they could contribute to their household budgets, but that husbands are those who are main providers, who should educate themselves if their budget allows them to, having the last saying on any issue in their households. Mainly Roma/Egyptian boys who participated at the workshops believe that women earn a slap, not realizing it is a violent act against their wives. The participants were educated that each act of violence is an offence with legal consequences.

As part of the envisaged grant scheme a **Public Call for proposals** was published in May 2016 which was opened for all organizations that participated in the planning workshop. A three party commission, consisting of the Gender Equality Program Coordinator, Project Manager and Officer provided additional comments for improvement of project proposals taking into consideration the local context.

The Grant recipients are the following organisations:

- **B&H:** **Better Future** from Tuzla *in partnership with Romani Ćej from Prnjavor; Otaharin* from Bijeljina *in partnership with Be my Friend from Visoko;*
- **Serbia:** **BIBIJA** from Belgrade
Romani Cikna from Kruševac *in partnership with Women Roma Center Veliki Crljeni*
Law Scanner from Belgrade *in partnership with Women Roma Center Veliki Crljeni*
- **Montenegro:** **CRI** from Nikšić *in partnership with NGO Rose from Berane and Montenegrin Women's Lobby from Podgorica*
Montenegrin Women's Lobby from Podgorica *in partnership with NGO Rose from Berane and CRI from Nikšić.*

The National coalitions/networks negotiated and agreed on the cooperation with each sub-grantee, thus the projects will reach several Roma communities in different municipalities. Therefore, community actions are being implemented through **seven grants, eleven organizations, twelve locations** in which the actions will cover **forty-eight municipalities, settlements and schools** (18 Primary schools and 7 High schools); *for more information please see Annex 5.*

All project partners have timely started the processes of implementing their projects. During the reporting period, the project partners accomplished results in the area of general and reproductive health, gender based violence and education reaching out to **3.554 persons in targed communities** in their respective countries; *for more information please see Annex 6.*

GENERAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

Bosnia and Herzegovina

21 Roma women and 1 Roma man were assisted; Partner organization organized gynecological exams out of 16 women have had additional examinations (colonoscopy – 8 women and mammography – 8 women). **Partner organizations assisted 5 Roma women and 1 man in getting health insurance.**

The distribution of *educational material* “**Guide to access your rights**” in Roma communities was supported by community mediators so that Roma community members would be directly informed of mechanisms for exercising their rights. As a result **23 Roma women and 1 Roma man have succeeded in realizing their rights of Social Benefit.**

Republic of Serbia

The project implemented by Law Scanner will influence the improvement of relations between the local authorities and Roma settlements making the health institutions more accessible to the Roma communities. The project team organized 8 meetings with representatives of institutions in targeted Belgrade municipalities (Head of Office for Free Legal Assistance to Victims of Domestic Violence of Zvezdara Municipality, and Public Health Center of Zvezdara as well as with Member of the Municipal Council of Zemun responsible for working with Roma communities in the municipality have contributed to a better understanding of the institutional work on health issues with Roma communities at the local level. The impression is that there is an institutional framework for working with Roma communities, but that has not been used to its full capacity of what is referred to many reasons (financial, political, organizational) and one of them is certainly the weak response of Roma community on offered assistance given (training on different topics, primarily). As the discussions at the meetings determined, very often there is no clear set of duties and responsibilities of institutions at the local level, for example, between the municipalities although there are efforts to improve the situation of the Roma community, expected results are not achieved.

In this reporting period **14 workshops were conducted in Roma settlements in the municipalities of Zemun, Cukarica and Lazarevac. Workshops overviewing the state of public health, the health of women and children were organized for women (81), men (2) and children (47).** Women were advised to go to their gynecologist for examinations if this was not done in the past year. In conclusion, stemming from a series of interviews with the participants, Roma women are aware of their lack of concern about their own health and largely explain it by lack of time and the inability for someone to take care of their children and home while they are visiting the doctor. They show a distinct restraint to share information about their health condition in front of other participants in the workshop.

The importance of preventive screenings have been discussed with women and to access that right, patients are required to have a proper health insurance card; thus procedures and processes of the health system were explained to the participants. Women reported some unpleasant experiences with physicians when they turned to them for help and that they were somewhat daunted to go for check-ups. Some of the participants at the end of the workshop confirmed that they will visit the doctor more regularly and that the given advices during the consultations helped them.

It is significant to emphasize that, the men from the visited settlements do not express interest in participating in the workshops, but also that at the time of the realization of the workshops, they are outside the settlements. Although they were invited to participate in a special workshop for men, they refused to attend and work together on achieving the objectives of these activities. In the following period the project team will explore different/modified approaches to raise the interest of Roma men in participation at workshops.

Only 2 men participated in one of the workshops designed for men: **1 man was supported with legal advice and an appeal was written on his behalf** as he was not able to exercise his right to health care or his right to pension compensation achieved by working in Kosovo and Metohija.

Law scanner created 3.000 leaflets on general and reproductive health and health of children; hundreds of materials have been distributed in Roma settlements, municipal buildings, health centers, and branch buildings for social affairs for easier access.

Montenegro

Two workshops focused on reproductive and sexual health raised awareness of 36 women in Berane and Nikšić.

In Berane, a gynecologist of the Public Health Center educated 18 female participants on the importance of preventive examinations, contraception, hygiene and health. The Participants stated that they rarely go to doctors and/or gynecologists and were interested in making appointments for gynecological examinations and effective, but cheap contraceptives. As women experienced mammography is not available to all women in the Public Health Center of Berane, in following reporting periods the project team will organize a meeting with the responsible person in order to look for an acceptable model to make mammography appointments and examinations.

In Nikšić, a gynecologist from the local Health Center held a workshop where 18 women participated. During the workshop a couple of women made an appointment for a gynecological exam and two pregnant women were interested in having their delivery in a hospital although having no insurance. All participants were given a hygienic package, which has been donated from a supplier who recognized the need of these women after our partner organization CRI raised awareness on this topic.

GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Due to the fact that research consultants dealing with violence in Roma communities are scarce and the last research was conducted in 2011, the partner organization Better Future decided to conduct a research on gender based violence. With the help of mediators, the research on gender based violence against Roma women was conducted in targeted locations September through December 2016. As mediators conducted the research, a two day workshop was organized where women and men had the chance to get familiar with the methodology and different questioners. The research paper will be finalized in the following reporting period.

A complement to the research was gathering official data on violence among Roma population and determination of its decrease or increase. But, after gathering the data from Prnjavor and Tuzla as well it has been determined that **institutions do not keep records on ethnic affiliation thus it is not possible to gather official data for Roma population, but population in general.**

One training for 15 active Roma women was organized with the aim to get them fit to monitor and influence policies related to the rights of Roma women against gender-based violence.

Republic of Serbia

As the project of Bibija is dealing with the sensitive issue of GBV, which is not quite often addressed in Roma communities, the project has visited targeted Roma communities and in October organized a two-day certified training "How to deal with gender based violence victims" which was lead by Victimology society of Serbia, a non-profit organization focusing on gender based violence for the past 25 years. The training was attended by 28 representatives of partner organizations and FAIR II coalition partners as well as mediators and peer educators of the FAIR II project. 7 groups each consisting of 16-18 Roma women have been organized and a set of **7 informative workshops** has been held in targeted communities.

Montenegro

3 out of 5 **informative-educational workshops focused on gender based violence** held, breaking the stereotypes and prejudices linked to domestic violence, protective legislative measures and harm-

fulness and sanctions linked to arranged child marriages reaching **68 women**. The difference among Roma/Egyptian communities in these targeted locations is quite noticeable because of the following: In Podgorica, an urban area, the group of **31 women** was quite open to talk about gender based violence, thus the women disclosed that the reason why they are suffering violence is rooted in their tradition and learned behavior (e.g. they agreed to arranged marriages), but they are aware that they lack education and are not economically empowered to resist and are forced to continue to suffer the violence. Compared to the previously implemented projects through FAIR I, partner organization's representatives noticed the improvement in the opinions and views of women in regards to their children's education. Even though they would like for their daughters to have a better life, they feel infirm when their daughters fall in love and leave the house to be married; it can be concluded that learned behavior is powerful among generations.

In Berane, a rural area, **27 women** participants were reluctant to disclose any information or even discuss domestic violence explaining that cases of domestic violence are quite rare in their community and if happens it is solved in the frames of the family and the community. They also consider arranged child marriages as normal and support it especially in cases of marriages abroad. Women are familiar that arranged child marriages are against the law, but as they have not been sanctioned yet in their community they are not bothered by it. As participants stated girls would not report their parents for arranged marriages as they consider that their parents know what's best for them.

In Nikšić, through CRI, **10 participating** women were mainly interested in sanctions against their violators, procedures and protective measures which are protecting women in cases of domestic violence including shelters and maximum time women can spend in them. As the workshop was lead by a representative of the Police Department who used to work in the Department for domestic violence and juvenile delinquency **1 of the participants has reported her ex-partner and of the violence she suffers. The case is now in procedure.**

Senstitization

Due to the lack of coordination between institutions and the experience in recognizing, understanding and dealing with cases of victims of domestic violence has been noticed among representatives of institutions dealing with such cases, thus the project partners organized **2 trainings (Podgorica and Nikišić) for representatives of institutions and NGOs which brought closer 35 participants to Roma communities and their issues:**

Podgorica: 18 participants of "Standards of conduct of Police and Centers for Social Work in cases of domestic violence and arranged child marriages" training were representatives of the Police Department, Center for Social Work, Public Health Center, Institute for Emergency Medical Services, Red Cross, Public Institution "Ljubović" – a center of institutional placement of children in conflict with the law, Ministry for Human and Minority Rights, Institute for Education, Public Institution "Kakarička gora" – an institution for placement, rehabilitation and resocialization of drug users, and Office for Fight against Trafficking in Human Beings. The training focused on arranged child marriages and the application of legal solutions at the local level, how to establish good communication with victims and potential victims of violence and arranged child marriages. The participants gained concrete and practical knowledge on the treatment of the Center for Social Work and the Police in cases of violence and arranged child marriages and were introduced to the legislative framework and their advantages and disadvantages in the application through practical work.

Special attention was given to the importance of multi-sectoral collaboration, and its continuous improvement and development.

17 representatives of institutions and NGOs from Nikišić (Police Department, Center for Social Work, Health Center, Emergency medical service, Nikšić Municipality, SOS Nikišić, Defendology Center for Security, Sociological and Chriminological researches) participated at the training "Violence and health consequences; Prevention and Protection of victims of violence". Beside these topics the participants discussed the issues faced when it comes to psychosocial and medical assistance of victims of violence in the field; Centers for Social Work are not always able to conduct psychosocial treatment, and even Mental Health Centers often lack sufficient qualified staff who would be able to work with perpetrators of domestic violence. In the everyday practice, Emergency Medical Service does not have a model or indicators to identify violence, and employees are not trained to keep records on this issue.

The trainees concluded that cooperation among professionals and different services is a must, also the creation of a unique data base to be used for all services, creation of indicators for identification of domestic violence victims and victims of forced marriages.

Podgorica:

The Podgorica team or Montenegrin women's lobby team organized **1 debate** in the camp "Konik 1" led by a female Independent Police Inspector for the suppression of blood crimes and domestic violence of the Police Department in Podgorica. The debate focused on gender based violence including domestic violence, emphasizing the consequences of violent behavior, early child marriages together with health consequences for girls and legal implications of such actions under Montenegrin law.

25 Roma/Egyptian women and 10 men participated at the debate, but only 15 of the women agreed to sign the attendance list. The men refused to be in the same room with women as they do not consider appropriate to be in the same room with other men's wives, sisters or daughters and that possible arguments with women's male family members may arouse, thus men and women were separated during the debate.

Male members of Roma/Egyptian community in general approve and practice yelling at and occasionally hitting the female members of their families. Female members of the community denied any violent behavior of male family members towards them, but know cases of such behavior and refused to discuss about it as "it is not their business".

During the debate two participants reported of having two family members who are drug addicts.

EDUCATION

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Many Roma organizations are dealing with Roma leaving their respective countries in search for a better life, but when returning, to BiH, their children are facing difficulties in regards to education and enrolling back to school in the appropriate grade and quite often the children lose at least one school year for being abroad. Irregular school attendance and departure of Roma students abroad is a permanent risk Roma organizations are facing.

2 Roma Assistants and 2 School Assistants are engaged in two partner organizations (Otaharin and Be my Friend) to identify Roma children in need of assistance and to accompany them to and from the 21 additional organized classes in Math and local language for children to catch up with their peers. As these children mostly come from big illiterate families they cannot get any help at home so they improve their knowledge by attending these additional classes. The improvement in their knowledge is tested after one school semester.

To further support the children, the project also supports Roma parents through the organization of meetings for parents of Roma students discussing the importance of education, regular attendance, grades etc. These meetings are organized by Roma and a School Assistant. In the reporting period **11 meetings were held with 38 parents which resulted in a higher attendance of children at additional and school classes.**

20 children were enrolled in the first grade in Bijeljina and Visoko and in 17 cases the field and **School Assistant had to intervene and provide assistance.**

As local and national institutions do not have funds dedicated for this kind of support of education and in order to support children's education in Bijeljina, Janja, Visoko and Živinice, **school books/school bags were given to 336 Roma children (149 girls and 187 boys).**

The number of children enrolled in the first grade of high school in Bijeljina is quite low – six students were enrolled this year, who have also been supported with school supplies; the reason is the small number of children successfully finishing primary education.

The cooperation of institutions and their engagement in resolving individual cases is often crucial. In Bijeljina the **Mobile Intervention Team (MIT) is a good example for institutional cooperation and local mechanism with the aim to strengthen a community. The MIT consists of representatives of the municipality, the Centre for Social Work, the school representative and Roma mediators of "Otaharin" who are involved in solving Roma issues related to education (school absence, bad grades, and inappropriate behavior). The MIT goes out to the field visiting targeted Roma families. The frequency of visits depends on current issues and period classes. The Team made 6 visits to Roma**

communities intervening with 72 families in Bijeljina and 3 visits visiting 10 families in Živinice. The same model of the team should be transferred to Visoko area and for that purpose a meeting in Visoko with institutional representatives was held. In 85% parents are willing to cooperate with the MIT and visited families usually have problems related to poor living conditions, poor hygiene caused by poverty, domestic violence, alcoholism and inadequate care for children. The main reason for the MIT visits is the absence of children from school, the inclusion of children in the school system, provision of information on the activities of the Day Center and the available care. **These visits have been affected an increasing number of children involved in the school system, the better the success of children in school, fewer absences and better cooperation and understanding among beneficiaries, representatives of institutions and professional staff Otaharin.**

Republic of Serbia

9 meetings have been organized with representatives of 4 primary schools in Kruševac with the aim of establishing cooperation. One of the projects tasks is to monitor the progress in area of education; to increase the number of Roma children enrolled, prevent drop out and assist Roma children to stay in schools. According to the national law, schools are not required to provide data on the ethnicity of their students, but using personal contacts or goodwill of the directors of schools, the data can be obtained, thus **from 3 primary schools in Kruševac the data has been collected.** For future reporting the data will be processed and children monitored.

In the field in Kruševac the children are receiving psycho-social support improving their own self-image. These **positive messages have been transferred to 113 Roma children through 6 organized workshops (3 in each location).** The aim of the workshops were, for children to learn and to think about and identify their own values, develop self-consciousness and one's particularities, mutual differences and similarities.

6 workshops (3 in Lazarevac and 3 in Kruševac) gathered 51 women and 8 men with the aim to strengthen their parental competences familiarizing parents with the modern model of parenting that respects the rights of the child in the family. Parents are closely familiar with the team that parental behavior and values are the basic principles of parenting in the best interests of the child. The parents stated that good parenting considers putting food on the table and a roof over the head, and that caring behavior toward the child, respecting the child as a person and empowering the child is not a priority as mothers do not have enough time to devote to children, due to excessive duties they have to make some money.

To empower parents and children to education, even more activists of Romani Cikna made **20 house visits** to Roma parents.

Montenegro

As Roma/Egyptian children are hardly finishing primary schools, they are also rarely attending high schools thus the project is targeting these schools, children and their parents is being offered assistance and advocating services. CRI has focused on establishing cooperation with three high schools including project's mediators which will act as liaison between schools and Roma/Egyptian communities.

Altogether, CRI held 5 meetings with 3 high schools were additional efforts from both sides were made in favor of Roma/Egyptian children and the continuation of their education.

At the beginning of the project CRI has been informed that in Nikšić **only 10 Roma/Egyptian children** (4 girls and 6 boys) are **attending high schools** out of which 5 boys are attending the Economic and Catering school. **At the request of the parents of one boy, CRI reacted towards the school and the boy is now enrolled and attending the school regularly.**

In the Public Secondary School, the CRI team held a meeting with two teachers who act as mentors to Roma/Egyptian children as part of the REF (Roma Education Fund) project where a future cooperation between the two teachers and the FAIR II mediator has been established.

Through the close cooperation with the above mentioned three high schools, the CRI team received grade records of Roma/Egyptian children attending these schools and monitors their successes. To increase the support to the children, CRI organized a meeting with the parents in order to be informed of possible issues their children might be facing, but the meeting revealed a lack of interest of Roma/Egyptian parents since only three mothers attended the meeting. The team supported these mothers through educating them on how to monitor the attendance of their children and what steps to take in cases of non-attendance.

During a meeting with a representative of the Center for Social Work, the CRI team presented the mediator it's work and established a modus of sending requests towards this institution in cases of needs of individuals of Roma/Egyptian community.

An example of the lack of interests in education of Roma students and the reservation of certain schools, is the high school "Marko Radević" in Podgorica which has 4 four Roma/Egyptian boys enrolled in school and no Roma/Egyptian girls have never attended this school. The school expressed their interest in a future cooperation but only through the Ministry of Education.

The team of the NGO Rose in Berane organized a meeting with the Center for Social work. During this meeting the fact came up that Roma/Egyptian parents from this area do not send their children to schools, especially purposely missing the opportunity to enroll their children in first grades. The meeting resulted in organizing an additional meeting with Roma/Egyptian parents including representatives of the Police Department, the Center for Social Work and the NGO Rose. Topics of this meeting were that parents got educated on compensatory education and it's importance thus with the assistance of NGO Rose **27 children got enrolled in the first grade** after organizing a general medical examination and visit to a psychologist which are mandatory for all children enrolling in schools. At the beginning of the school year **139 Roma/Egyptian children attending first to ninth grade were supported with school supplies.**

Representatives of the Center of Social Work and PS "Radomir Mitrović" were the only members of the Commission for Monitoring of Scope and Regularity of Education of Roma and Egyptian children in Berane. The team in Berane advocated the intake of new members into the Commission which would have contributed to a more comprehensive monitoring of the children, thus now the Commission has expanded the membership to ***representatives of the Police Department, the Secretariat of the General Administration and Social Affairs, Roma and non-Roma NGOs.*** During October 2016 for all the aforementioned members of the Commission a two day seminar has been organized which resulted in ***defining guidelines, principles of work and a Action Plan as a joint action of members and an expert.***

FORUM THEATER AS A TOOL OF RAISING AWARENESS OF A COMMUNITY

The Forum Theater is a motivational entertaining public event that can be used for raising awareness of a wider community as it is participative for the public, opens discussions and participants exchange opinions and individuals can, if willing, propose different solutions for certain issues raised by the actors of the Forum Theater. On the other hand, Forum Theater players send a message to the community.

4 Forum Theater plays have been organized in Nikšić, Podgorica and Berane focusing on education, especially for Roma/Egyptian girls. **290 members of the Roma/Egyptian community** saw the Forum Theater play (86 men, 84 women and 120 children). Players of the Forum Theater were Roma/Egyptian students and activists who managed to be free of negative practices and prejudices towards the education by their community, so they act as community role models.

EDUCATION OF ADULT ROMA WOMEN

2 young Roma women have started their education as beauticians in Podgorica; this training is certified and lasts for three months. A certain lack of responsibility and tardiness has been noticed thus the commitment to education will be supported by engaging in obligation contracts.

Output 2: Local inter-sectoral coordination mechanisms established and strengthened to support the social inclusion of Roma communities;

The **Assessment of the existing inter-sectoral committees** was within the competence of main partner organizations for which they engaged experts.

During FAIR I project in **B&H** inter-sectoral commissions were established in Tuzla, Lukavac, Živinice, Prnjavor, Bijeljina and Visoko. The assessment for the next two years recommended: activating the work of commissions, organizing regular meetings, providing capacity building and sharing best-practices, strengthening cooperation between public institutions and Roma organizations, introduction of regular reporting and of a systematic, planned work; *for more information please see Annex 7.*

The process of formalization of cooperation of Inter-Sectoral Commissions through a Memorandums of Understanding has been initiated through organization of meetings and advocacy efforts with representatives of respective institutions emphasizing importance of formalization of cooperation which would assist main project partner in B&H to easier gather information from the targeted institutions and enhances the swiftness of reactions in assisting Roma communities. **This process has been finalized in Tuzla city and the MoU has been signed with the Ministry of Health of Tuzla Canton, Ministry of Work, Social Policy and Return of Tuzla Canton, Institute for public health of Tuzla Canton, the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Tuzla Canton.**

In work of Inter-Sectoral Commission it has been planned to include the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of Tuzla Canton, but after multiple requests and meetings the Ministry has decided not to be directly included in the commission thus the Ministry will cooperate according to their Strategy of Cooperation with NGOs.

In **Republic of Serbia** BIBIJA finalized mapping of needs of local mechanisms in four towns: Šabac, Kruševac, Požeravac and in four municipalities in Belgrade (Čukarica, Zemun, Zvezdara i Lazarevac). The conducted assessment concluded that local authorities are not showing sufficient amount of will to improve the position of Roma communities located in their territories. Even though legislation is in place, assessed local mechanisms do not periodically report on their work and implementation of Action Plans. Main issue that needs to be addressed is the methodology of harmonization of budgets and planning of activities; *for more information please see Annex 8.*

Social inclusion of Roma population in Kruševac is additionally supported by joining the Inter-sectoral commission in Kruševac, but as the city government changed after the local elections, the **members of the local inter-sectoral commission are still unknown** due to undefined positions in governmental structures.

In **Montenegro** CRI has increased its activities for formalization of a Coalition partnership which resulted in signing of six MoUs with the Center for Social Work and Police Department of Nikšić, Institute for Public Health, Women RAE Network First and Montenegrin Women's Lobby. One MoU was also signed with the International Police Association based in Podgorica, strengthening their collaboration on social integration of Roma and Egyptian women and children. CRI lobbied through the Ministry of Work and Social Welfare and the Ministry for Human and minority rights which resulted with signing of MoU with the Parliament of Montenegro. These MoUs will strengthen the cooperation and exchange among coalition members, to better serve the target communities.

Assessment of the Coalition has been finalized and Strategic plan for 2016 – 2018 developed, recommendations created. The document includes three phases; analysis and evaluation of the previous work, setting strategic goals and priorities and development of Operational plan of activities for 1 year; *for more information please see Annex 9.*

Through organization of 6 meetings Montenegrin coalition members continue to network and keep good relations with institutions.

CRI is a member of multi-disciplinary team for prevention of violence in Nikšić, as CRI was informed of a **case of an early child marriage of a fourteen year old girl** who started to live with „married“ family coalition members as well as multi-disciplinary team has been alarmed upon which both **the coalition and the team reacted and joint actions were taken** which resulted with a decision to return the girl to her own family but Center for Social Work took custody of the girl and supervises the family. Certain members of Roma community were against such actions putting the blame on CRI and activists who were trained to be mediators.

Roma women are active in different working and advisory bodies, groups and commissions (BiH 6 advisory bodies, Serbia 3 and Montenegro 4) which will be monitored during the implementation of the project and involvement of Roma women in the bodies.

The above described mechanisms will be enhanced and actively utilized also in the context of ER1, when the implementation in local communities via sub-grants.

The work of CBOs in identified localities by sub-grants has been supported by the **employment of 9 mediators (6 Roma women and 3 Roma men) as of September 1, 2016**. CARE provided training for 15 mediators (7 women and 8 men) in Banja Koviljača from June 27-30, 2016 improving their communication skills and skills for a comprehensive community work. Mediators have been employed by the main project partners but directly working in the localities and in close cooperation with CBOs implementing ER1. During the training, potential mediators who have a personal experience acting as mediator in Serbia were introduced.²After this training the project team in cooperation with main project partners has developed reporting formats and new monitoring tables as well as data base for documentation of cases, on collective and individual bases, for mediators and main project partners.

Right after the mediators' training, before their employment, they have been included in work of partner organizations through mediation. Since CRI from Montenegro together with coalition partners has been very active in prevention of early child marriages one of selected and trained mediators has been included in previously mentioned case of prevention of a marriage of a fourteen year old girl. The mediator has been exposed to pressure and threats inflicted by certain number of men, members of Roma community, after which potential mediator has been reallocated for his own safety. This event has caused two of trained mediators to withdraw from mediators' positions and partner organizations have identified two new mediators who have started with their mediators work.

Even though the mediators in September 2016 have just started with their community work, the visibility and recognition of all organizations included in this project has been significantly increased. Since the engagement of 9 mediators they provided 1.044 services to 1.520 persons from 46 Roma communities. As the Roma population is excluded and mainly segregated many of Roma are disconnected with the rules and regulations of the institutions thus the mediators provide advices and share knowledge on institutional regulations, thus they assist in different areas: In area of health mediators assist community members in obtaining documents for the certification of health cards, organizing examination by a general practitioner, a specialist gynaecologist, enabling the agreement on free delivery at hospital in cooperation with the immigration office. In area of education mediators assist Roma men and women to be entitled to health insurance, assistance in obtaining funds for treatment in a hospital for, school supplies provided in cooperation with Red Cross, school books for 2 Roma students provided, provided assistance in overcoming vocational subjects, provided additional assistance in learning and connecting foster mother and teachers, individual and group meetings organized with parents and school officials, 4 children who returned from abroad enrolled in schools. In area of counselling: Assistance in exercising the right to social welfare and one-time financial assistance, advice and support to initiate action in the field of security in their communities, guidelines for a way of addressing the Center for Social Work and the City Administration on the issue of finding accommodation, advice to include experts in the field of mediation in resolving the dispute in the area of violations of labor law, how to exercise a right to custody over children, etc. In area of Personal documentation: Obtaining personal and other documents such as identity cards, birth certificates, certificates of državljanstvu, various certificates, applications for grants for housing for Roma / Roma women, exercising the right to one-time and permanent social assistance, registration of newborns in birth.

Humanitarian assistances are mainly focused on distribution or provision of firewood, hygienic packages and school supplies through other donors or municipalities; *for more information please see Annex 10.*

²<http://care-balkan.org/index.php?otvori=novosti&prikazi=548>

Table 2: Total number of individual persons who received some kind of assistance by Mediator(s)

Area of assisting	Number of services	Women	Men	Boys	Girls	Total persons
Health	137	67	9	4	8	88
Education	181	88	29	28	50	195
Personal and other documents	111	52	25	5	7	89
Counseling	200	102	55	3	5	165
Copying, request writing and similar	223	117	52	1		170
Humanitarian assistances	164	158	1	222	354	735
Gender based violence	13	6		7	5	18
Other	15	37	3	11	9	60
Total	1044	627	174	281	438	1520

ER3: National networks of Roma and non-Roma women organizations are capacitated to influence and monitor implementation of policies related to Roma women’s rights and gender equality on local and national levels and actively engage into accountability mechanisms;

National coalitions of Roma and non-Roma women organizations were established and/or supported by CARE in order to strengthen advocacy efforts on the national level and to enhance the ability of our partner organisations to influence public policies. For better understanding of capacities of organizations and their collaboration within Coalitions/Networks in this reporting period an **Assessment of national networks/coalitions has been initiated and finalised in this reporting period by external experts**. All experts recommended for these informal networks/coalitions to be stronger formalized. Nevertheless the legislation in the region recognizes only the legal form of an NGO for this purpose. Formalization would cause the loss of value/identity of the member organisations and extra costs which will be difficult to cover. Whilst as informal network/coalition the capacities and resources of members are used to influence positive changes in public policies.

For **B&H network** a workshop has been held in order to facilitate this process at which 13 persons participated with participation of one CARE representative. The process has been explained and a questionnaire developed. The workshop was held in Sarajevo, 26 – 28 February, 2016. During this joint activity, priorities were discussed as well activities on prevention of GBV, increase of visibility of Roma women activism planned. Apart from the Assessment; *for more information please see Annex 11*, a Strategic plan for 2016 – 2019 has been developed.

The assessment indicated that Roma NGOs, in order to professionalize and to become builders of a Roma movement, need:

- A stable core staff of good quality and willingness and openness for change and development.
- Ownership for the concept of movement building and an intrinsically belief in the importance of a grassroots Roma movement.
- A long term investment and support. Bringing the organizations to a higher level is a slow process which needs structural support taking the local context into account.
- There is always the danger that the involved leaders start to compete for positions and resources. That is the why the networks need “core organizations” which can act as a Secretariat, driving and neutral force for creating trust and common agendas. When a Secretariat is in place, as it is now in the Network, there is need for further support by other members.
- For grassroots leaders it is difficult to bring the Network to a higher professional level and to make it sustainable. For this, leaders are needed with a higher education and used to work in a professional situation.
- There is also a need to engage more youth into the organizations and Network per se. Young people have a better understanding of the importance of networks and movement building.

The Strategic plan 2016 – 2019 has following main aims: permanent capacity building WRN "Success", enhancing financial sustainability, development and improvement of partnership structure, enhanced political participation of Roma women, joint advocacy activities, preservation of Roma tradition, language and culture, research.

Due to lack of official data on Roma children in schools, members of the network agreed on **gathering data on education of Roma** since 2013 to 2016, to create a data base including information on the real number of children in schools, high schools and drop outs.

In **Montenegro** based on the suggestion of CRI, the assessment had a focus on Women's RE network "FIRST" with developed strategic plan 2016-2018; ; *for more information please see Annex 12.* In order to maintain this network, which is important for present and future work and for enhancing cooperation among women Roma organizations, this suggestion was supported. The assessment identified multiple obstacles: unclear division of roles, lack of management skills and resources for running the network and lack of office space. Based on the assessment, CRI took steps in change of the management structure of the network. A new plan of activities has been created and implemented timely and workshops in aim of capacity building of members of the network.

Assessment and Strategic plan 2020 has been created for Roma Women Network of Republic of Serbia during seminar of the network during which Board meeting and yearly assembly of the network has been held. Bibija facilitated the harmonization of text of Strategic plan 2020 of Roma Women Network which has yet to be adopted by network members. With the objective of the adoption of the document and the planning of activities for 16 days of activism, Bibija organized two meetings with the network members, but with no results regarding the adoption of the document.

The network consists of thirty women Roma organizations and activists. Issues causing obstacles in work of the network recognized by the assessment are in political-legal (change of government) and economic context (unemployment and growing poverty). Following objectives were agreed under the strategic plan 2016-2020:

- Changing gender patterns within the Roma family and community.
- Reduction of stereotypes, prejudices, discrimination and violence against Roma women.
- Impact on public policies, especially those relating to European integration.
- Improving the rights of minorities and women and Capacity building of the members.

Assessment also recognized the strengths of the Serbian network as they organized 600 workshops, produced 2 alternative reports on the human rights of Roma women in Serbia CEDAW and influenced improvements on Strategy for improvement of status of Roma men and women. Members of the network have been recognized by the Coordination Body for Gender Equality in Serbia, as they participated in development of their Action Plan.

Activities concluded by the FAIR II networks/coalitions in the reporting period

In order to improve the situation of Roma men and women in their countries, partner and coalition members participated in development of important policies on local and most importantly on national level.

Thus BIBIJA and coalition members in **Serbia** were included in the development of three important national strategic documents:

- Strategy for Social Inclusion of Roma men and women in Republic of Serbia 2016 – 2025,
- Strategy for Gender Equality and following National Action Plan for 2016 – 2017.
- Advocacy for inclusion of Roma women issues in the Action plan for Action Plan for Chapter 23 for EU Integration Bibija together with League of Roma³ have been working on the chapters related to fundamental rights(Chapter 23) for the past two years; in this reporting period BIBIJA commented the draft of the AP two times and 60% of the comments have been accepted and included in the document.

In Lazarevac, our coalition member is involved in the revision of LAP for Roma. In Kruševac, also with participation of our coalition member, a new Strategy for the Improvement of the Status of Roma and an Action plan from 2015 to2020 was developed.

³<https://www.ligaroma.org.rs/en/>

In **B&H** the Roma Strategy and the development of new Action Plans is foreseen. Better Future is in process of preparation for this upcoming task, in coordination with the Agency for Gender Equality of B&H.

In **Montenegro** CRI participated in development of Strategy for Social Inclusion of Roma and Egyptians in Montenegro 2016 – 2020.

Women Roma organizations, our partners and the affiliated Coalition/Network members continue organizing activities on awareness raising of Roma issues with special focus on Roma women, ongoing discrimination and importance of inclusion of Roma women in public and political life:

B&H:

Under the campaign “Equality for all” (March 8 – April 8) - which has been organized five years in row by Women Roma Network “Success” - partner organization Better Future organized seven street actions, two meetings with representatives of institutions and one Roma community meeting. The International Roma day was celebrated by Better Future on April 7, with participation of representatives of public institutions, local and international NGOs and in cooperation with the primary school “Mejdan” Tuzla presenting Roma traditions and culture.

In order to increase visibility of the needs and challenges that Roma women and communities are facing, other Roma organizations that are members of the FAIR II network organized: Five street actions, three Roma community meetings, twenty – two meetings with institutions, one Forum Theater, one photo exhibition, eight workshops with Roma women, one conference, Day of Health and three markings the World Day of the Roma men and women. These activities were organized in Visoko, Prnjavor, Kakanj, Bijeljina, Vitez, Sarajevo and Zenica which were covered by 32 media events.

Serbia:

As part of the campaign of Month of Roma Women Activism, project partners organized 2 events:

- BIBIJA organized 10 workshops in 10 Roma settlements for 230 Roma women on public activities, where in Roma women can participate within the following period and that are related to the new Roma Integration strategy.
- Two meetings: a) with Commissioner for the Protection of Equality and her associates on discrimination which affects Roma women and b) with representatives of the Office for Human and Minority Rights, the Commission for Gender Equality of the municipality Zvezdara, the Protector of Citizens and several members of the Serbian network of new the Roma strategy.
- March on the occasion of the International Women’s Day on March 8. This march has been organized by Women in black linking all women organizations.
- March against racism, organized by Roma Association Novi Bečej on March 21, 2016.

Serbian coalition members held two meetings, one with Deputy of Ombudsman for Gender Equality and Children Rights and one with Deputy Director of Office for Human and Minority Rights. The meetings resulted with arranged round table which will be held in Palace of Federation as part of activities of 16 days of activism.

Montenegro:

CRI together with Institute for Public Health on March 7, 2016 organized street actions and **lectures on reproductive health** in three Roma settlements. There is a strong opposition on this topic, but a handful of Roma men were positive about the message. This creates potentials for next steps on including male role models as part of the effort to **engage Roma and Egyptian men** stronger for gender equality. Two additional campaigns will be organized during 16 days of Roma activism.

On April 8, 2016 CRI organized a **forum theatre performance** called “Equality for all” on the main square of Podgorica, where 35 young Roma and Egyptian students participated. Three main messages were presented by the play: 1) “Equal rights to education for everyone”, 2) “Children's arranged marriage is stronger than laws, let's find a solution! Combat Children's arranged marriages!” and 3) “Protect children who beg, children do not belong on the street”.

As a support of main project partners towards coalition members, Better Future, has supported Roma Association "Roma Girl – Romani Ćej" in writing a motivation letter for the involvement into the Commission for Employment of Roma by the Institute for Employment of Republic of Srpska. BIBIJA has been leading the process of agreeing on obligations and duties with regards to coalitions and sessions with topics on grant activity planning. CRI supported the NGO "Rose" with interest letter writing for OAK foundation and mentoring of women REA network "FIRST" with conclusion of accounts and writing request towards the Ministry of Internal Affairs for change of management of the network. Also, partner organizations supported other coalition organizations from their respective countries in project proposal writing for CARE's sub-granting scheme.

Monitoring of policies: On the local level, there is also a continued effort to influence local policies by the members of our affiliated Coalition/networks. As a result this year the City of Tuzla allocated 20.000 Euros for "Aid to Roma population" (in previous years these funds were allocated for implementation of AP for Roma). Better Future together with other Roma organizations proposed the allocation of these funds to education activities for Roma women and men or for social programs (employment and health). The suggestion has not included housing, because international organizations already implement projects in the area of housing, which are funded by EU. This request process is still ongoing and the final decision is up to the institution. Better Future has also been invited by the Association "Children of Earth" to participate in the development of an Action plan for Social Inclusion of Tuzla City for 2017 – 2018.

CAMPAIGN 16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM

From November 25th, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, until December 10th, the Human Rights Day, **the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence Campaign** carrying **a regional message "Child marriages are not the tradition of Roma"** was carried out by CARE and the project partners, all together implementing **35 activities**. CARE with the support of the project partners organized 2 round tables (BiH and Serbia) and a press conference in BiH.

During the *Round table in BiH*⁴ the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Tuzla Canton reported a decline in the reported cases of arranged child marriages thus in year 2013 the number of such reported cases was 24, in the year 2014, 17 and in 2015, 8 cases. In addition taking repressive actions in order for Police Officers to participate in lectures and workshops organized in schools. Unfortunately, a number of cases stay unreported/undetected in the community especially when the minors have been willingly married or are forced to live within the union.

In Serbia, a *Round table*, with the main topic of the society's response to violence against women, with a special focus on violence suffered by Roma women was held in the Palace of Serbia under patronage of the Office for Human and Minority Rights of Government of Republic of Serbia. The speakers at this Round Table were: the Deputy Director of the Office for Human and Minority Rights of the Republic of Serbia, the Special Advisor to the Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Serbia and the President of the Coordination Body for Gender Equality of the Government of the Republic of Serbia, the Deputy Ombudsman for Gender Equality and Children's Rights, representatives of UN WOMEN, CARE International and Roma women's network. The roundtable resulted in recommendations that were submitted to all the relevant ministries, institutions and international organizations.

Additionally the project partners organized 32 activities (BiH 10, Serbia 18, Montenegro 4) as follows: street actions, street march, round tables, workshops with youth and representatives of institutions and meetings with representatives of institutions and Roma activists; *for more information please see Annex 13*.

In Belgrade the national campaign "Speak up – fight against the violence" was held in Belgrade, Kruševac and Lazarevac. The informative and educational part of the campaign was carried out in Roma settlements in the aforementioned three locations, through workshops on the recognition and prevention of violence against women. **8 workshops raising the awareness of 140 women** on how to recognize violence were held.

⁴ <http://www.rtvslon.ba/u-tuzli-odrzan-okrugli-sto-o-temi-djeciji-brak-nije-tradicija-roma-i-romkinja/>, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y3L3Ke-8NC0>, <https://www.klix.ba/vijesti/bih/problem-maloljetnickih-brakova-u-bih-djeca-radajau-djecu-i-nerijetko-zavrjavaju-kao-zrtve-trgovine-ljudima/161128105>, <http://www.rvttk.ba/tk-info/dnevnik>

Different promo materials (leaflets, calendars 2017, magnets, etc) were developed in Serbian and Romani language. A radio jingle spreading the message to a wider public has been transmitted on Youtube and important national (Radio Belgrade 1 and 2, Radio 202, Radio TV Vojvodina; O Radio and Radio Novi Sad) and local radio frequencies (Radio Srem and Fruška Gora), Roma Internet and Radio Roma World.

Output 4: Targeted Roma women organizations are strengthened to become active players in networking on regional and European level with Roma and non-Roma peer organizations and relevant institutions

As part of these results area FAIR II national coalitions or selected member organisation will be networking with other regional and European level networks and relevant institutions. In the second year for the project, the project team will take more intensified actions in researching and connecting project organizations with international stakeholders.

The project aims to liaise closely with the **European Romani women network Phenjalipe** and/or IRWN (the International Roma Women's Network) – these two networks have started the process of uniting into one. CARE is in the process of establishing closer contact with the informal Phenjalipe network.

September 21-22, 2016 in Strasbourg two representatives of Women's Roma Network "Success" participated preparatory meeting for 6th International Roma Women Conference organized by the Council of Europe. The 6th International Roma Women Conference will be held in October 2017 in Romania with possible following topics: Political participation of Romani women, Health care and Insurance, Economic empowerment and employment, Discrimination in education, Domestic violence (early and forced marriage), Roma in the context of migration in Europe and Personal documents.

Second day of the meeting the general Assembly of the International Roma Women Network⁵ (IRWN) was held. The aim of this Assembly was to expand the number of members of the network and to elect new president and a new Management Board. Also this initiative was proposed from all members to merge Phenjalipe⁶ platform which has launched a Strategy on the Advancement of Romani Women and Girls (2014-2020)⁷ with the International Roma Women Network

This current Management Board is going to be in charge for one year. The new board members are:

President:	MsMiranda VUOLASRANTA- Finland
Vice president:	MsManjolaVeizi-Albania
Treasurer:	Ms Sandra HEREDIA FERNANDEZ- Spain
Secretary:	Ms Norica COSTACHE-Romania
Member:	Ms Martine SERLINGER- France

Project partners continue to cooperate with international organizations, donors and important international institutions, thus BIBIJA has been preparing for a meeting with the EU Delegation. In cooperation with the League of Roma our partner has been involved in drafting the Shadow EU Progress report of Serbia for 2016, as well as the CEDAW related shadow report.

As a part of the feedback process of the CEDAW in Montenegro, CRI is currently actively involved.

Better Future held a meeting on March 7, 2016 including representatives of the Council of Europe regarding the status of Roma men and women in BiH on specific cases of discrimination against Roma as well as on the next steps to update the NAP. A representative of Better Future participates in the working group for development of the CEDAW shadow report in the area related to the status of marginalized women.

⁵<http://www.feminismus.cz/cz/clanky/the-international-roma-women-s-network-is-launched>

⁶<http://www.coe.int/de/web/portal/roma-women>

⁷[https://cs.coe.int/team20/cahrom/8th%20CAHROM%20Plenary%20meeting/Phenjalipe%20Strategy%20on%20the%20Advancement%20of%20Romani%20Women%20and%20Girls%20\(2014-2020\)_final%20EN.pdf](https://cs.coe.int/team20/cahrom/8th%20CAHROM%20Plenary%20meeting/Phenjalipe%20Strategy%20on%20the%20Advancement%20of%20Romani%20Women%20and%20Girls%20(2014-2020)_final%20EN.pdf)

In October, main project partner from BiH participated at the workshop "Guide through the maze of the EU – How to advocate?"

In November project partners and project staff participated at couple of activities: EU Council representatives together with Roma organization Romalen Kakanj visited CARE in regards to address Roma issues and learn about CARE's efforts in improvement of the situation of Roma in the region.

The Commission for Gender Equality of the House of Representatives of the Parliamentary Assembly, with the support of the Agency for Gender Equality, Ministry for Human Rights and Refugees and the OSCE Mission to BiH organized a Thematic Session: "Women's participation in politics - challenges and opportunities" at which the presentation of the resolution of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe 2111 (2016) on the assessment of the impact of measures to improve the representation of women in politics.

The Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees was visited by CAHROM discussing linking policies for Roma and combating poverty through an integrated approach.

A presentation of Alternative CEDAW Report on the implementation of concluding observations and recommendations of the CEDAW Committee for Bosnia and Herzegovina from 2013 to 2017 was organized in Sarajevo.

In December CRI participated at the Regional conference: Advancing the gender equality agenda in the Western Balkans and Turkey organized by EU,CE, Ministry of Human and Minority rights,UN Women and UNDP.

In Serbia, BIBIJA was included by UNICEF in the development of their yearly report on their work as well as planning future activities.

While working on the project itself the project manager (PM) has attended events organized by CARE and other organizations:

- November 11-13, 2015 CARE through the initiative focused on inclusion of boys and men in promotion of gender equality and addressing all forms of violence organized international conference „Fatherhood and equal engagement of fathers in parenthood in the Balkans: practice, policies and researches“ promoting best practices and policies supporting fathers and guardians to be actively included in all aspects of child care and family life.
- PM and Better Future representative participated at the book presentation "Wendepunkt – empowerment, emancipation, participation of Roma women" containing stories of 25 Roma women from the Western Balkans. The presentation was organized by Romane Romnja and it was held in Berlin, on November 27, 2015. Both of them were speakers at the presentation during which they had an opportunity to meet representative of EC and other women from informal women Roma network Phenjelipe and IRWIN.

Background/ context (update)

The **Decade for Roma Inclusion - launched in 2005** - has been concluded last year with only very modest results reached. The efforts formulated under the Decade will continue to be funded mainly within the context of IPA 2020 projects for countries of the Western Balkans. The **Regional Council for Cooperation (RCC)** will have a lead in funds management. The regional initiative „Roma Integration 2020“ is financed by the EU and the Open Society Foundation with 1,8 million Euros and shall be covered from the Belgrade office of RCC. **It causes concerns for the civil society however that there is lack of information on the planned disbursement scheme.** The project team closely follows up on any further information in this regards.

Bosnia and Hercegovina:

Bosnia and Herzegovina is comprised of two entities, the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH), with mostly Bosniaks and Croats, the Republika Srpska (RS) with mostly Serbs and the Brčko

District a multi-ethnic self-governing administrative unit. Roma form one of the biggest group of the 17 national minorities living in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In 2013, after twenty-two years, the Agency for Statistics of B&H conducted a census, but the National Assembly of the Republic of Srpska rejected the adopted methodology for data processing. Nevertheless, the data of the census has been published, but has not been confirmed as official for the following reasons; the census only acknowledges three constitutive nationalities (Bosniaks, Croats and Serbs) and all other groups are considered as “others”.

Table 3: Population of B&H by nationality, census 2013⁸

Territory	Sex	Total	Ethnicity/Nationality					
			Bosniaks	Croats	Serbs	Does not declare	Others	Unknown
BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA	TOTAL	3.531.159	1.769.592	544.780	1.086.733	27.055	96.539	6.460
	M	1.732.270	867.492	267.789	534.030	11.503	48.294	3.162
	F	1.798.889	902.100	276.991	552.703	15.552	48.245	3.298

Despite the prevailing system, before the census Roma NGOs made efforts to raise awareness of Roma population and underlining the importance of indicating their ethnicity as it is assumed that a large number of Roma declared themselves as Bosniaks due to the discrimination they fear to face otherwise.

During the previous census, in 1991, only 8.000 declared themselves as Roma, but reports from the field indicated much larger numbers. Taking this fact in consideration in 2010 the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees (MHRR) of BiH began to build their own database of Roma and their needs. This data set counts 17.000 individuals, but the process of data gathering has been questioned by NGOs since the registration in Roma communities was done during the day when most of Roma are not present in their homes. According to **NGO estimates there are around 30-40.000 of Roma in B&H.**

The distorted statistics can worsen the position of Roma population in B&H. Recently funds dedicated by the government for Roma Inclusion have decreased in 2016 by approx. 315.000 Euros. These funds are now re-allocated to refugees, single mothers, disabled and other national minorities.

In post-war B&H Roma population faces a number of difficulties in access to fundamental human rights guaranteed by the Constitution. Apart from existence of the legal framework pertaining to national minorities and gender equality Roma, especially Roma women, continue to have limited access to health care, social protection and employment and are left behind in the education system. Speaking of **access to health of Roma** NGO actors indicate that **around 65%⁹ of them are not in the health care system, and most of them women in childbearing age and children.**

The Employment Bureau of Federation of BiH does not have records on the number of employed Roma in the FBiH, given that there is no jurisdiction for the monitoring and management of such records. In 2011 the Consortium consisting of the World Bank, UNDP and the Fundamental Rights Agency conducted a comprehensive **Regional Roma Survey** covering issues of socio-economic concern and of access to fundamental rights. When comparing localities, where Roma live next to non-Roma residents the survey came to a conclusion that the employment rate of Roma aged 15-64 years is only 19% (men 32%, women 5%) compared to 35% of their local non-Roma neighbours. The informal employment incidence is a striking 81% in case of Roma and 22% in case of the majority population.

⁸Agency for Statistics of B&H

⁹According to the UNDP-World Bank Roma Regional survey 70% have indicated having insurance, but a critical 68% have no access to drugs.

Institutional and public policy background: In BiH drawing on the experience of the Roma Decade's implementation, members of the **Roma Board at the Council of Ministers**¹⁰ on a Session held on September 8, 2015 have unanimously reached the conclusion that the Decade process of Roma Inclusion is to be continued with a long-term perspective and formalized for at least the coming 10 years.

Local context linked to ER1: Beside the existing legal documents and legal framework pertaining to national minorities and gender equality, especially Roma women continue to have limited access to health care, social care and employment. Cases of domestic violence, lack of access or poor quality of health services and poor participation in public and political life are questions that still need to be addressed. Violence against women in Bosnia and Herzegovina, especially domestic violence, is deeply rooted and a widespread social problem. Bosnia and Herzegovina is a deeply traditional and patriarchal society especially when it comes to Roma communities. A common view is that Bosnian society should deal with "more pressing" issues, such as transitions and effects of the war, while women rights, a life without violence or anti-discrimination are of secondary importance. Bosnia and Herzegovina society does not support and has no understanding for women victims of violence. Roma women are particularly vulnerable because of the widespread prejudice that violence against women is part of the Roma culture which influences also the attitude of the state institutions. This issue is neglected and institutions do not provide adequate assistance and support to Roma women victims of violence.

In the City of Bijeljina lives the largest Roma community in this entity (RS) with 541 family members registered in 117 households¹¹. It is estimated that about 33% of the members of Roma households is in the age group between 0-14 years. Roma in Bijeljina live in very difficult conditions, often in houses that have no running water or electricity, most of them are engaged in collecting recyclable materials in order to support their families. Because of their specific way of life and a large percentage of illiteracy and prevailing prejudices against Roma, they live isolated in their settlements and are not included in a community life. In Bijeljina, Roma students are attending three elementary schools, currently there are 141 students enrolled in the elementary schools, five in the secondary school and one at the university. However, 72 of those 141 Roma students, regularly attend school¹².

In the town of Visoko, Roma families live more than 150 years in the communities Kriz, Ljetovik, Mostre, Gračanica and in the city part. 2,320 Roma live in the Municipality Visoko which represents 5.6% of the total population of the municipality. The Number of employed Roma at the level of the municipality is between 1-2%. They live in substandard housing, more than 70% of Roma live in homes that do not have the minimum sanitary conditions for life (kitchen, bathroom, toilet, etc.). Roma in Visoko are faced with many problems. The biggest problems that Roma are facing in Visoko are the housing problems, problems with health insurance, unemployment and the problem of schooling.

National level policies: The Board has already launched the initiative for development of a new **Strategy for Addressing Roma Inclusion**, since the current is not gender sensitive nor it is acceptable for Roma population. There is still no exact information on when this initiative is to be started.

According to the schedule of the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees of BiH and the Council of Ministers for year 2016 a revision of the **Action Plans in areas of health, employment, and housing education for 2017-2020 is foreseen**. Three expert working groups have been formed out of which one for health in which main partner organization representative (Better Future) participates.

Local Action Plans of Roma inclusion: Through CARE's EU funded project „Active Participation of Roma Inclusion“ designed to enhance cooperation between Roma representatives and representatives of institutions on local levels four Local Action Plans have been designed and adopted in Travnik,

¹⁰ Roma Board at the Council of Ministers is the highest body in B&H involving Roma. It consists of 22 members (11 Roma members and 11 representatives of institutions) and the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees provides expert and technical support to the Board. The Board has been established in 2002 and it is an advisory and coordinating body.

¹¹ Special report on the situation of Roma in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Institution of Ombudsman/Human Rights Ombudsman of Bosnia and Herzegovina, page

¹² The report from elementary schools at the end of semester of 2015/2016 school year.

Donji Vakuf, Prnjavor and Bijeljina. There is also a declared interest of local authorities for development of LAP in Tuzla.

Republic of Serbia:

According to the census in 2011 in Republic of Serbia there were 147.60413 people who declared themselves as Roma, which represent 2,1% of the total population of Republic of Serbia. Data on socio-economic status of Roma are collected only sporadically and with the exception of the Regional Roma survey with a poor methodology. The study "Roma in Serbia"¹⁴ speaks clearly about the differences that occur between vulnerable ethnic communities and the overall national level of social development. This difference ultimately determine the social status of the society, or certain ethnic groups in it¹⁵. The unemployment rate among Roma is assessed to be between 50-59% (from that women 82%), which is significantly above the national average of 22,4%. The economic marginalization is noticeable by data indicating that more than one-quarter (27,6%) of the total number of Roma households have their income through social benefits. In terms of access to health 66% of Roma claimed not having access to essential drugs in the Regional Roma survey.

In terms of education, MICS 516 indicates that only 80% of children from Roma settlements attended primary school (98% in the general population) and only 18% (compared to the 48% majority population in similar localities) attended pre-school education. As for their enrolment only 69% of Roma children started the first grade of primary school on time (in the general population 97%) and only 64% of Roma children complete primary school (in the general population 93%). This indicates a critical problem of labour market inclusion as only 22% of children of Roma origin attend secondary schools (in the general population this indicator reaches 89%). A particular problem is the drop out of girls due to patriarchal norms prevailing. The percentage of illiterate population in the total Roma population who are older than nine years old is 15.1%, which is way above the national average of 2%. To sum up the disturbing data are also evident when assessing the **education level reached**: over one third of Roma – 34,2% have not completed primary school; the share of Roma with secondary education was 11.5%, and with high education only 0.7%.

In April 2016 Serbia had local, national and provincial level elections. In practice this means that all institutions are in technical mandate¹⁷ starting from March 2016, thus laws and strategic documents are not adopted in this period. Political power has remained unchanged, however, individuals who carry out the duties of ministers, state secretaries, assistants on national level have changed thus advocacy activities have to be followed by introductions to new officials. Interestingly, even though elections in Serbia were in April, the government has been established August 11.

Local context linked to ER1 The violence within the family and intimate partner relationships is defined as a systematic, cross-cultural and cross-historical phenomenon that affects all the society. However, women in traditional patriarchal communities are exposed to an increased risk of violence. Placing woman in a subordinate position, without the right to have an opinion, on important life decisions, the accentuation of her inferiority, and all these factors sealed in a private social sphere, provide fertile ground for male violence towards women. The hesitation and the reluctance of the police to intervene in these "private" issues, as well as the fact that women don't trust institutions and expect a social judgment from them, rather than support, maintain violence within the family and intimate partnership relations beyond the realm of social action. The reform of the juridical system in the direction of improving the social response to domestic violence continues for decades. In order to respect human rights, the state must intervene whenever there is violence. Although violence in Serbia has been criminalized in 2002 and so far several strategic documents clearly declare against domestic

13 Census of Population, Households and Apartments 2011, Volume 7: Economic activity, National Bureau of Statistics, Belgrade, 2013, page 10-11

14 Study „Roma in Serbia – between anvil, poverty an hammer of discrimination“, author Božidar Jakšić, Most Art, March 2016

15 Radovanović, Knežević

16 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey of women and children in Serbia in 2014 and the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey of Women and Children in Roma settlements in Serbia in 2014, National Bureau of Statistics and UNICEF, 2014

17 Institutions have the power to maintaing and upkeep every day obligations, but have no power of making any decision.

violence and violence in intimate partner relationships have been adopted, there are few measures implemented in order to actually combat and prevent violence.

The causes of the poor health of the Roma population are among the following reasons: poor life conditions, especially hygiene, lack of access to health care, lack of awareness about prevention and irresponsible attitude to their own health. The files show the small number of reported cases of violations of the rights of competent institutions (Advisor for the protection of patients' rights). The practice of the Law Scanner showed that Roma women and men don't have enough knowledge about their rights to health care and also don't know the way for exercising these rights. The main reasons are: illiteracy, fear of discrimination, lack of information and knowledge about how to represent themselves.

All residents of Krusevac and Lazarevac face everyday problems, just like most people in Serbia. Among all the inhabitants, Roma men and women are the most disadvantaged. The disagreement over the exact number of Roma, as well as a marked variation between the official and widely accepted figures, is a good example of the degree of marginalization and alienation of the Roma population. Frequent migration makes the exact number of Roma extremely difficult to determine.

In the City of Krusevac a small number of Roma families is integrated into the general community and other families live in three larger and four smaller segregated Roma settlements. Approximately 50% of the Roma population is illiterate or having 1-3 years of primary education; about 25% have up to 7 years of primary education; about 20% finished the primary school and about 4% complete the secondary school, while the higher forms of education involve only 0, 2%.

Lazarevac is a municipality in the city of Belgrade and counts 58,224 inhabitants, of whom 650 are Roma (323 men and 327 women) - data from the last census in 2011. Roma settlements in the municipality of Lazarevac are located in local communities: Sokolovo, Veliki Crljeni, Stepojevac, Županjac, Medoševac, Upper Town and Momcilo Pavlović. The settlement called Sokolovo is 25 km away from Lazarevac and present 45 households.

The largest numbers of inhabitants are Roma women and children and 99% have not finished primary school.

National level policies: Taken into consideration that in the context of the EU integration of Republic of Serbia progress on Roma inclusion has a high priority, based on the request of the European Union, in March 2016 **the Strategy for Social Inclusion of Roma Men and Women in Republic of Serbia 2016 – 2025¹⁸ was adopted.** The Strategy has been developed by an expert group together with an inter-ministerial group, where BIBIJA, our main partner was also participating. The aim is to intensify work of institutions on national and local level regarding social inclusion of Roma men and women and combat discrimination. The new Strategy has **5 target areas: Education, Health, Employment, Housing, Social Protection while Gender Equality and Cultural Identity are cross cutting topics.** Even though gender equality should be a part of every document, **measures related to gender have not been successfully incorporated** besides attempting to introduce gender language and some minor measures (mostly in the areas of education and health policy). The novelty brought by the new Strategy relates to the focus placed on the local level. For now we know that the mechanisms for monitoring and collecting data will improve - gender sensitive statistics will be set up, which is a good start, but it is only a basic step to promote gender equality. BIBIJA will seek to influence the creation of indicators, but will primarily focus efforts related to the budget creation. The related action plan is yet to be prepared.

Besides the Strategy for Social Inclusion of Roma Men and Women in Republic of Serbia 2016 – 2025, the **Strategy for Gender Equality and accompanying National Action Plan for 2016 – 2017 has been adopted.** BIBIJA participated also in the design of this document. Unfortunately, **neither of these two documents assesses the situation of Roma women** (except that the Roma are mentioned in the enumeration of vulnerable groups) nor proposes concrete measures to improve the situa-

¹⁸ <http://www.minrzs.gov.rs/cir/aktuelno/item/4874-strategiju-za-socijalno-uklucivanje-roma-i-romkinja-u-republici-srbiji-za-period-od-2016-do-2025-godine>

tion of Roma women in certain areas – there are two measures aimed at them, namely: 2.1.4. *Support for young and teenage mothers* and 2.3.4. *To promote female social entrepreneurship in rural and urban areas - initiative for determination of quotas for women in programs for funding and incentives for social enterprises, particularly for women belonging to vulnerable groups.* Important measure for this project is: 2.2.4. *To ensure the participation of women, including members of vulnerable groups and/or their representative organizations, in the process of creating, implementing and monitoring of policies at all levels and in all fields.* Strategic documents in other sectors (in the area of employment and social protection) mention the Roma community only declaratively (and some women in particular), but do not list any concrete measures and activities for implementation.

Local Action Plans (LAPs): At this moment out of 164 municipalities about 70 municipalities have adopted LAP which are mainly focusing on 4 priority areas. Unfortunately, most of the LAPs are not budgeted. Out of 70 LAPs only 14¹⁹ have a special area on “status of women”, which is also the least budgeted one. Measures related to health and reproductive health have received the highest budget allocation. 20 municipalities used IPA 2012 funds in total amounting to 5 million Euros, which were invested in the development of local initiatives based on mobile teams consisting of pedagogical assistants, Roma health mediators, local Roma coordinators and representatives of Centers for Social Work and Employment Service. The practice is that once a strategic document is budgeted it remains budgeted in the next year. The decision on who is implementing LAPs is quite often brought through public calls for application with projects by NGOs which is not considered a good practice, since implementation of LAPs should be mainstreamed and not implemented through projects. LAPs are still dependent on short-term projects and donors.

Situation on LAPs in towns in which coalition members are registered and active:

Kruševac adopted a new Strategy for Improvement of Status of Roma 2015 – 2020 and an Action plan for its implementation. The AP does not include any special measures for Roma women, and it is oriented on areas of education, employment, housing and health of Roma population. Only some of the activities are budgeted.

Lazarevac is currently revising its LAP with its 7 areas, including status of Roma women. Considering that election campaign is ongoing it is most probable that the new local government will continue with the revision.

Belgrade has 17 city municipalities out of which in 7 biggest municipalities live the majority of the Roma population. These 7 city municipalities adopted strategic documents that have the aim of improving the status of Roma communities. Status of women is included in three of them (Zvezdara, Lazarevac, Barajevo).

In all of these cities coalition partners are actively included in design of these strategic documents.

Montenegro:

According to the current and available data from the census in Montenegro²⁰ 8.305 Roma and Egyptians live in Montenegro of which 6.251 declared as Roma (1.01% of the total population) and 2.054 as (0.33% of the total population of Montenegro). The largest number of Roma is living in the territory of Podgorica (3988), then in Berane (531), Nikšić (483), Bijelo Polje (334), Herceg Novi (258), while the largest number of Egyptians is living in Podgorica (685), Nikšić (446), Tivat (335) and in Berane (170).

Based on the research of the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights from 2016, 77% of Roma and Egyptians live in segregated settlements, predominantly in the three municipalities, namely Podgorica (57% of Roma and Egyptian), Nikšić (11 %) and Berane (9%). When it comes to housing conditions, the data show that about 60% of households live in inadequate housing (30% in the barracks and 37%

¹⁹Bibija – Women's Roma Center which has been actively involved in advocating development of LAPs in Serbia. Also, their activities are focused on women's rights in general with special focus on Roma women.

²⁰Monstat, 2011

in provisory objects). When it comes to household equipment, data show that only 47% of households have a bathroom, 81,7% have electricity, and 39% sewerage. Illegality is a big problem in the settlements in terms of property ownership and employment.

From the three countries the worst results are reached in Montenegro in terms of primary school enrolment (only 51% of RAE children). From those in the system only 20% (boys) and 12% (girls) finish actually primary school. 7% complete secondary school²¹.

Local context linked to ER1: Based on the experience in working with Roma women in Roma communities in Podgorica, Bijelo Polje, Niksic, Berane and Pljevlja, with women and girls victims of trafficking who have stayed in the shelter for victims of human trafficking, CARE has identified that in the communities traditional and patriarchal family relations are still very present; women are in a subordinate position and multiple discriminated. The phenomenon of early marriages and arranged children marriages as a major problem is very present in the RE population, especially for girls who are between the age of 12 to 15 years. Examples of the victims of early marriages and arranged children marriages from the field and from the Shelter show that those girls in the age band have been already married once (and some 2-3 times) and have children.

In the last ten years, Montenegro has made progress in the field of inclusive education, although Roma and Egyptian children, due to the multiple discrimination and overall poverty, as well as the numerous social reasons, very often do not attend the school system on a regular and compulsory basis. There is not only one reason for the high dropout rate, but there are multiple interrelated factors: stigma and discrimination, poverty, housing conditions and hygiene, culturally conditioned attitudes and tradition in the community, low rate of preschool attendance, the quality of education, disadvantages in the monitoring system and slow implementation of the laws aimed to improve their status.

National level policies: The policies of Montenegro, in some extent, recognize the importance of continuation of work which contributes to social integration of Roma and Egyptian population, which is confirmed by the development of the **Strategy for Social Inclusion of Roma and Egyptians in Montenegro 2016 – 2020**. (adopted during the first quarter of year 2016). The Strategy includes the following areas: **Housing, Education, Health, Legal Status, Employment, Social Status and Family Protection and Culture, Language and Identity**. The new Strategy does not recognize domestic violence as an individual area, but it is part of the section Social Status and Family Protection. For implementation of the Strategy and Action Plans the following institutions are responsible: Ministry of Human and Minority Rights, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Work and Social Affairs, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Sustainable Development and Tourism, Employment Institute of Montenegro, Directorate for Refugees, Community of Municipalities, Office for Fight Against Trafficking in Human Beings. Community of Municipalities (local governments), Roma Council and non-governmental organizations will participate in activity implementation.

Local Action Plans: In 2014 **seven municipalities** (Herceg Novi, Berane, Bijelo Polje 2013 – 2017, Ulcinj, Tivat and Kotor) **adopted Local Action Plans for Roma and Egyptians**. Local representatives of Roma and Egyptian population participated in development of these local policies. **Nikšić and Podgorica do not have LAP**, since the previous one expired in year 2015. A follow up is however expected. Based on experience, local action plans are not implemented sufficiently, either as scheduled. Action plans are in some part implemented only in the field of housing when it comes to Berane, Bijelo Polje and Herceg Novi while in Tivat in addition to housing a lot of importance is paid to education.

²¹UNICEF, June 2013

Stakeholder analysis

The FAIR II project is targeting 14 Roma and non-Roma organizations/institutions included in national coalitions that are advocacy networks that promote rights of Roma communities. The project will support them through joint regional activities focused on personal and organizational capacity building and mentoring and part of them will be participating in the field level interventions that target Roma communities in 12 localities. Their participation enables them to apply for grants in communities: **B&H:** Citizen's Association Youth Roma Initiative "Be my Friend" - Visoko, Association "Life of Roma" – Sarajevo, Association "Roma Girl – Romani Čej" – Prnjavor, Associations "Otaharin" and "Roma women", both from Bijeljina); **Republic of Serbia:** Law Scanner - Belgrade, Romani Cikna – Kruševac, Women Roma Center Veliki Crljani - Lazarevac and **Montenegro:** Police Department Nikšić, Montenegrin Women's Lobby - Podgorica, Rose – Berane, Network PRVA; Public Health Institute).

In 2016, the main partner organizations in collaboration with members of coalitions and networks provided 1.100 direct assistances (informative, legal, health, humanitarian) and supported 1.084 individuals - Roma men, women, youth and children who directly reached partner organizations in their offices.

Target groups of main project partners that will participate in local coordination mechanisms (ER2) and advocacy activities (ER3):

B&H: International level: / **State level:** / **Cantonal level:** Ministry of Justice and Administration of Tuzla Canton; Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports of Tuzla Canton; Ministry of Internal Affairs of Tuzla Canton; Employment Bureau TK; The Ministry of Health TK; The Ministry of Labor and Social Policy TK; Public Health Institute TK. **Local level:** Center of Social Work Tuzla; City of Tuzla; PS Međan Tuzla; JU OŠ Međan Tuzla; JU OŠ Podrinje Tuzla; PS Podrinje Tuzla; An informal network of female Roma "Success";.

Serbia: International level: / **State level:** / **Local level:** City Belgrade Commission for Gender Equality of city's municipality Zvezdara; Belgrade City Health Council; City of Belgrade-Secretariat for Social Welfare; City Municipality Lazarevac - advice local community VelikiCrljeni.

Montenegro: International level: Commission for Gender Equality at Parliament of Montenegro, Institute for Public Health Podgorica (team for support to RAE population). **Local level:** Center for Social Work Nikšić, Police Department Nikšić, Nikšić municipality.

Stakeholders of main project partners:

B&H: International level: Romane Romnja Berlin; ROWNI Italy; Swiss Embassy in BiH; Council of Europe; The US Embassy in Sarajevo; OSCE Mission to BiH; Embassy of France. **State level:** Agency for Gender Equality of BiH; Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees BiH; Parliament Assembly of BiH; Ministry of Security of BiH. **Cantonal level:** Employment Institute of Tuzla Canton, Ministry of Health of Tuzla Canton, Ministry for Work and Social Policy of Tuzla Canton. **Local level:** Association - Tuzla, Helsinki Parliament of Citizens of Banja Luka, Center for Info – legal aid Zvornik; Roma association Euro Rom Tuzla; Tuzla Community Foundation; NGO Coalition Equality for all in BiH.

Serbia: International level: EU Delegation in Republic of Serbia; UNICEF; UN; WOMEN;UNFPA. **State level:** Office for Human and Minority Rights of Government of Republic of Serbia; Office for Cooperation with Civil Society of Republic of Serbia; National Office for Employment; Commissioner for Protection of Equality; Protector of Citizens, Ombudsman; Commission of National Assembly of Republic of Serbia for Human and Minority Rights and Gender Equality. **Local level:** Belgrade City, Secretariat for Social Protection.

Montenegro: International level: Ministry for Human and Minority Rights, Institute for Public Health Podgorica (team for support to RAE population). **Local level:** Nikšić municipality, Electro distribution Nikšić.

Field level activities through institutional support of the main project partners:

In Serbia Bibija has been active to reach Roma women in the local communities: Through project “Early marriages: violation of rights of Roma women” implemented in six Roma settlements in Belgrade BIBIJA held 36 informative and educational workshops for Roma women on topic of prevention of early marriages, also life stories of 110 Roma women (aged from 15-56) have been collected and published²². Bibija is active in Roma communities (Zemun, Kijevo, Veliki Crljeni, Zemun polje, Rakovica). **In 2016 Bibija provided 297 legal advisory services to 203 women, enrolled 110 children in first grade, and applied 46 affirmative measures for enrolment of Roma children in high schools.** As Bibija is actively involved in development and realization of Roma Strategy as the new government had not been appointed for couple of months in the reporting period advocacy activities could not have been initialized Bibija activists directly implemented activities in the field to communicate to 230 Roma women about the Strategy implementation.

Center for Roma Initiatives (CRI) in Montenegro has been active with missions on combating and preventing violence. By June 30, 2016 CRI worked on four cases connected to domestic violence (three cases), arranged marriage and education (one case). Upon being informed of each case, CRI, has taken appropriate measures of reporting the perpetrators to the Police Unit in Nikšić. In one case of domestic violence the violator has been arrested and interrogated by the Police while in two other cases there were no repercussions since the victims did not want to report their husbands. In a case of arranged marriage two coalition members (the police department and the Center for Social Work) undertook joint actions of placing a victim of arranged marriage in a safe house. By additional efforts of CRI this girl has been re-enrolled in school and her progress has been closely monitored.

Better Future has supported school children of primary and secondary schools with school supplies and textbooks, and additional humanitarian activities.

All main partners are still very present at the field recognized and accepted by Roma communities thus beneficiaries feel free to seek assistance directly in partners’ offices which happens quite often; from begging of the project **1.084 beneficiaries** have turned to main project partners in their offices with different needs.

Table 4: Total number of individuals/beneficiaries reached by all three main partners

Total number of individual beneficiaries to whom services provided through institutional grants										
Type of services	Total # of services	RAE		RAE children		Non RAE		Non RAE children		Total:
		F	M	Girls	Boys	F	M	Girls	Boys	
	#									
Services - health	92	91	1							92
Services - legal advisory	396	245	39							284
Services - copies, writing requests etc.	232	111	86	4	9	1				211
Registration in birth register	1			1						1
Aquiring personal documents	30	19								19
Enrolment in primary school	111	1		66	44					111
Affirmative measures for enrolment in high school	46			42	14					56
Tranlation	1	1								1
Humanitarian activities	123	120		115	75					310
SUB-TOTALS:	1031	587	126	228	142	1	0	0	0	1084
SUB-TOTALS F+M:		713		370		1		0		
Total # of indirect beneficiaries		Total # of direct beneficiaries 1084								
Sub-Total ethnicity		Total RAE		1083		Total non RAE		1		
Sub-Total by gender/adults		Total women		588		Total men		126		
Sub-Total by gender/adults		Total girls		228		Total boys		142		
Sub-Total F-M by gender		Total female		816		Total male		268		
Sub-Total by age group		Total adults		714		Total children		370		

For details per country please see **Annex 15**

Table 5: Total number of individual participants reached through organized activities by three main partners

²² <http://www.bibija.org.rs/vesti/88-pre-rani-brakovi-zivotne-price-romkinja>

Individual # of participants at different activities organized by 3 project partners						
Type of activity	# of activity	# of participants		# of institutions	# of NGOs	Total:
		F	M			
	#	F	M	#	#	
Educational workshops/seminars	69	775	216	33	17	991
Round tables	36	36	60	15	30	96
Meetings	53	374	247	65	51	621
Trainings	2	24	8	0	6	32
Street actions	11	512	118	2	2	630
Coalition meetings - coordinator's role	0	0	0	0	0	0
Network meetings - coordinator's role	10	71	21	0	25	92
Coalition meetings - through project	1	3	1	1	1	4
Association meeting assembly	1	18	0	0	0	18
Additional	14	1.275	1.187	1	1	2.462
Total number of indirect beneficiaries	0	0	0	0	0	0
Events:	197	3.088	1.858	117	133	4.946
Total persons		4.946				
Total institutions:		117				
Total NGOs:		133				

For details per country please see **Annex 16**

Table 6: Total number of individuals reached by CARE

Total number of individuals CARE workshops						
Type of services	Total # of services	RAE		Non RAE		Total:
		F	M	F	M	
	#	F	M	F	M	
Workshops/ Trainings/Round tables	12	60	28	46	13	147

For details please see **Annex 17**

Table 7: Total number of individuals reached by FAIR II project through all activities

Total number of individual beneficiaries through all grants														
Type of grant	Total # of services/ events	RAE		RAE children		Non RAE		Non RAE children		Undecided		Only gender component without nationality is recorded for these activities		Total:
		F	M	Girls	Boys	F	M	Girls	Boys	F	M	F	M	
	#	F	M	Girls	Boys	F	M	Girls	Boys	F	M	F	M	
Institutional, services	1.100	587	126	228	142	1								1.084
Institutional, partner's activities	197											3.088	1.858	4.946
CARE educations	12	60	28			46	13							147
Mediators community work	1.044	627	174	438	281									1.520
Community grants	1.328	1.391	318	802	637	160	53	125	56	8	4			3.554
TOTAL	3.681	2.665	646	1.468	1.060	207	66	125	56	8	4	3.088	1.858	11.251

Monitoring results

Please refer to Annex 1 for the detailed description of the quantitative and qualitative dimension of the achievement of outcome and outputs.

In terms of general monitoring and follow up, the project team provides support to partners, frequently by e-mail and phone communication, but also visiting them in their offices or participating at their events; *for more information please see Annex 18 I 19.*

Monitoring activities by the project team have occurred. Apart from developing progress reports for institutional grants, monitoring tables have been introduced to partner organizations. This monitoring tool has previously been introduced during FAIR I with which project partners have had some difficulties with. These tables were discussed and explained, but further support is needed.

The CARE project team has visited partner organizations and followed their activities. On the other hand the Project partners monitor the coalition/network member organizations' activities through regular meetings, analysis of accomplished results compared to planned activities.

Visibility

Visibility and project materials have been designed, printed and distributed to 3 main partners: 4 roll-up banners, 10 flags, 50 USBs, 400 project brochures out of which 100 of them in English language. CARE regularly updates its website with news on the actual project activities²³. The ADC visibility guidelines are adhered to when implementing visibility actions. To all partner organizations promo materials were distributed which were utilized for the campaigning activities: 200 bags, 200 posters, 700 stickers, 1250 table calendars for 2017 and 1150 flyers. *Annex 20*

The project partners in Serbia and Montenegro²⁴ organized a press conferences in April 2016 in their respective countries presenting the project and issues that the project is tackling whilst the press conference in BiH was organized in November 2016 presenting the institutional and community grants. An additional press conference on community grants was organized in Prnjavor in August 2016.

To ensure a better visibility of the project, 3 activists of Romani Cikna were trained in updating the web site.

Table 8: Partner organizations' media events

MEDIA INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT and COMMUNITY GRANTS			
Country	B&H	Serbia	Montenegro
Press conferences	2	1	1
TV	12	6	11
Radio	3	2	4
Newspaper articles	1	7	7
Web articles	51	12	9
Total media per country	69	28	32
Total media	129		

²³<http://care-balkan.org/index.php?otvori=novosti&prikazi=539>

²⁴<http://care-balkan.org/index.php?otvori=novosti&prikazi=542>

Lessons learned and perspectives

Regardless of good planning and assumptions reality is that our partners work in an environment in which volatile political changes demand flexibility; new appointed officials in local authorities could mean better or on contrary no understanding and support for Roma issues. In Serbia elections were held on April 5th, 2016 and the government was established on August 11th. In October 2016 local elections were held in B&H and in Montenegro parliamentary elections. The project similarly as earlier actively has been reaching out to new appointed officials and bridges over to continue to build on the advocacy efforts.

Learned lesson from this reporting period is that the intensity of cooperation with institutions dramatically decreases during election year and later until new officials are nominated. As election year poses an obstacle cross boarder exchange visits and learning are postponed for second year for the project.

Mediators in communities have had to establish a connection with newly elected officials which is time consuming.

Former experience indicates that some coalition/network partners even though having extensive capacities for field work in Roma communities often lack knowledge in long-term planning and writing long-term project proposals. This is systematically dealt with in the planning phase and via a targeted mentoring.

During awareness raising and street actions on reproductive health (which included distribution of free contraceptives by CRI in Montenegro)our partner has learned that there is a significant opposition from within the Roma communities. The new component of men engagement is therefore well placed to counter the resentments and to pilot the involvement of male role models into the implementation.

Finances

Our partner in Serbia plans on spending available budget as planned. But as they have acquired additional funding they requested to reallocate resources from the budget line for office rent to new IT equipment that serves the needs of better and more flexible field work and data gathering. CRI has also requested reallocation for purchase of office equipment which has been approved.

The project planned to purchase a project vehicle, which has been done according to CARE and ADC procurement guidelines. To ensure unobstructed future implementation of the project actions, relevant tax authorities were approached to obtain notification on the VAT related prevailing rules and the contract has been translated for these purposes.

In the processing of financial reports of Better Future (BiH) certain irregularities by the bookkeeping agency have been noticed. With the joint cooperation and timely response the issue has been resolved and as of August 1 new bookkeeping agency has been engaged by Better Future.

Treatment of value added tax (VAT):

B&H: In case of CARE for all invoices VAT can be returned within 2 years; for the project partner VAT can be returned for invoices over 200,00 BAM, thus as per regulation VAT will be excluded from the financial report.

Serbia: On January 27, 2016 the Ministry of Finance has offered their opinion on VAT deduction for donated funds which states that CARE as sub-implementing partner has a right for VAT deduction whilst Bibija, the partner has no such possibility. As per the Ministry of Finance, VAT deduction is a right of the implementing and sub-implementing partners; in this case CARE Austria acts as imple-

menting and CARE Balkans as sub-implementing partner. Invoices for all activities organized and paid by CARE have been VAT exempted since the start of the project. There is a written confirmation that Bibija our partner cannot be tax exempted. Translation of the, above mentioned, opinion has been provided in English.

The fact that work of institutions has been heavily impacted by internal and international relations has been proven in September 2016 when the Tax Administration which approves tax exemption for similar projects as this one has temporarily suspended the procedure for tax exemption without providing written confirmation to, in this case, CARE. As per CARE's assumptions this has happened due to criticism by international community towards Republic of Serbia and Kosovo issues. By additional engagement of Project Manager requesting a meeting with director of the Tax Administration Office this issue has been resolved and Tax Administration has issued tax exemption confirmation, but to be noted that these kind of attitude and behaviour of public institutions toward its beneficiaries, in this case, international organizations, does, unfortunately, happen.

Montenegro: On December 11, 2015 Ministry of Finance of Montenegro has issued their opinion on the treatment of VAT, which was submitted together with other documents to Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integrations. The latter issued on January 13, 2016 a Certificate of confirmation based on which CARE has the right to deduct VAT from invoice(s) which are to be submitted, together with VAT deduction request to Ministry of Work and Social Welfare before their payment. Due to this complicated procedure some of the invoices cannot be VAT deductible in practice (small bills which are to be paid at spot: parking, supermarkets, etc.). Project partner, CRI, has submitted its contract and documents to undergo the same procedure as CARE.

Partner organizations continuously seek financial support from different donors for realization of their ideas for improving lives of people in Roma communities. From recently CRI is CARE's partner organization on another project "Social entrepreneurship, step to independence" and "Social inclusion through economic empowerment of women in Montenegro JAKA" throughout which they support 20 Roma women with non-refundable funds for business start-up.

Annexes of the progress report

Annex 1: Filled in matrix with the detailed description of the achievement of outcome and outputs indicators measured against baseline and target values and reflecting the quantitative and qualitative dimension of the achievement

Annex 2: Detailed planning (action plan) and budget for the following reporting period (project year)

Annex 3: Time line

Annex 4: Baseline

Annex 5: Detail information on grants

Annex 6: Monitoring table, community grant activities

Annex 7: Assessment of Inter-Sectoral Committees, BiH

Annex 8: Mapping of Needs of Local Mechanisms, Republic of Serbia

Annex 9: Assessment and Strategic Plan of Informal Coalition, Montenegro

Annex 10: Monitoring activities, Mediators

Annex 11: Evaluation of RW Network „Success“ BiH

Annex 12: Evaluation and Strategic Plan of Women's RE FIRST

Annex 13: Activities of Campaign „*Child marriages are not the tradition of Roma*“

Annex 14: Summary of Socio Economic Data for FAIR II

Annex 15: Monitoring table, activities of project partners

Annex 16: Monitoring table, services

Annex 17: Monitoring table, CARE activities

Annex 18: Monitoring activities by CARE

Annex 19: Photos