



ALTERNATIVE REPORT

Voluntary National Review (VNR) 2026 on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals

Presented by: Roma Women Platform "ROMNI" from Moldova
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I. ABOUT THE ROMA WOMEN'S PLATFORM "ROMNI"

Roma Women's Platform "ROMNI" is a non-governmental organization founded in 2016 in the Republic of Moldova, which promotes the rights of Roma women and girls and contributes to combating the multiple and intersectional discrimination they face. The organization aims to strengthen the active and meaningful participation of Roma women in social, economic, and public life, as well as promoting equal opportunities and social inclusion.

ROMNI carries out advocacy activities, public policy monitoring, research, and independent reporting in the field of human rights, with a focus on gender equality, non-discrimination, access to justice, discrimination based on work and descent/social origin, as well as the inclusion of Roma communities. As a representative organization for Roma women in the Republic of Moldova, it contributes to monitoring the implementation of commitments assumed by the state in the field of human rights and sustainable development, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and relevant international treaties regarding the rights of women, children, and minorities.

In addition to monitoring and advocacy activities, the organization provides direct assistance to members of Roma communities in vulnerable situations. The support provided includes legal assistance and documentation, especially for obtaining identity documents and clarifying legal status, facilitating access to social, medical, and educational services, as well as interventions to improve living conditions and prevent situations of social exclusion.

Starting in 2022, ROMNI has been providing assistance to Roma refugees from Ukraine, supporting them in accessing temporary protection, social, medical, and educational services, as well as in overcoming administrative and legal difficulties encountered in the Republic of Moldova.

Through its work, the Roma Women's Platform "ROMNI" contributes to promoting an inclusive and equitable society, based on respect for human rights, equal opportunities, and the effective participation of Roma women and girls at all levels of public life.

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II. INTRODUCTION

This Alternative Report is developed by the Roma Women Platform "ROMNI" and provides an independent assessment of the progress and gaps in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the Republic of Moldova, from the perspective of human rights and its fundamental principle of leaving no one behind.

The report analyzes the situation of Roma women, Roma children, and Roma persons in situations of refuge, asylum, or forced migration, groups that continue to be affected by multiple and intersectional forms of discrimination based on ethnicity, gender, socio-economic status, and legal status, as well as discrimination based on work and social origin. Although the Republic of Moldova has made some progress in the process of aligning its policies with sustainable development goals, the benefits of these measures are not felt equally by all population groups, and the structural gaps affecting Roma communities persist.

The analysis is carried out through the lens of the obligations assumed by the Republic of Moldova under international human rights instruments, including the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD), as well as the Concluding Observations adopted by the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) in April 2024. The findings presented indicate that a significant part of the recommendations formulated by the Committee remain only partially implemented or have not been implemented at all, which directly affects the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, especially SDG 1 (No poverty), SDG 3 (Good health and well-being), SDG 4 (Quality education), SDG 5 (Gender equality), SDG 10 (Reduced inequalities), SDG 11 (Sustainable cities and

communities) and SDG 16 (Peace, justice and strong institutions).

The report is based on the analysis of the relevant regulatory framework and public policies, on public data and information provided by authorities, independent institutions, and international agencies, as well as on information collected directly from Roma communities through consultations with Roma women, mothers, Roma refugees children and other Roma person. This approach allows for highlighting the differences between commitments assumed at the national level and the actual experiences of beneficiaries at the local level.

The report's findings reveal that the access of Roma women and children to education, medical services, social protection, adequate housing, and justice continues to be limited by structural factors such as poverty, segregation, discrimination based on work and descent, and social exclusion. In the case of Roma refugees, these difficulties are amplified by the lack of identity documents, linguistic barriers, racial stereotypes and prejudices, as well as the insufficient adaptation of institutional mechanisms to the specific needs of this group.

Through this report, the Roma Women's Platform "ROMNI" contributes to the 2026 Voluntary National Review process, offering an independent perspective on the degree of implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals for one of the most vulnerable groups in the Republic of Moldova. The report aims to support national authorities, UN mechanisms, and development partners in identifying existing gaps and in developing effective measures based on human rights, equality, and non-discrimination.

At the same time, the document constitutes a tool for monitoring, advocacy, and holding public authorities accountable, signaling the existing inconsistencies between assumed commitments and their practical implementation. The report formulates concrete recommendations aimed at contributing to accelerating progress in achieving the 2030 Agenda and ensuring equal access to rights and opportunities for all Roma people under the jurisdiction of the Republic of Moldova.

III. METHODOLOGY

This Alternative Report uses a mixed methodological approach, which combines the analysis of qualitative and quantitative data to provide a comprehensive assessment of the degree of implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals in relation to the situation of Roma women, Roma children, and Roma people in a situation of refuge, asylum, or forced migration in the Republic of Moldova.

The analysis is based on the examination of relevant international and national documents, including the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD), the Concluding Observations of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) adopted in April 2024, as well as the regulatory and public policy framework applicable in the fields of education, health, social protection, employment, housing, and combating discrimination. Also, relevant national strategies and programs for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the inclusion of the Roma population were analyzed.

The report uses public data and statistics available from government sources, independent institutions, international organizations, and United Nations agencies, complemented by information collected directly from Roma communities. To this end, consultations were held with Roma women, mothers, Roma children, community leaders, and Roma refugees, to document their experiences regarding access to rights, public services, and protection mechanisms.

The applied methodology aimed to identify and evaluate the measures adopted by authorities for promoting social inclusion and protecting the rights of the Roma population, as well as analyzing the impact of these on groups in vulnerable situations. Special attention was paid to evaluating the implementation of the recommendations formulated by the CERD Committee and the degree of compliance of policies and national practices with international standards on human rights and non-discrimination.

At the same time, the report applies a comparative analysis between the progress reported by the authorities and the realities documented at the community level, with the aim of identifying the existing discrepancies between the regulatory framework and its effective implementation. This approach allowed for the highlighting of structural barriers, persistent forms of discrimination, anti-Gypsyism, and social exclusion, as well as the factors that hinder the equal access of Roma people to services and opportunities.

The findings and recommendations formulated in the report are based on the principles of human rights, equality, and non-discrimination and aim to contribute to strengthening public policies and institutional mechanisms necessary for the effective and inclusive implementation of the 2030 Agenda in the Republic of Moldova.

In the process of drafting the report, the principles of participation, accountability, transparency, and non-discrimination were applied, ensuring the integration of the perspectives and direct experiences of people affected by inequalities and social exclusion.

3.1. LIMITATIONS OF THE ANALYSIS

This analysis was conducted in the context of significant limitations regarding the availability and quality of data on the Roma population in the Republic of Moldova. One of the main challenges consists in the systematic lack of statistical data disaggregated by ethnicity, gender, age, and migration status, which hinders the accurate assessment of progress in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals for groups in vulnerable situations.

In numerous areas relevant to the 2030 Agenda, including education, health, employment, housing, and social protection, the available official data do not allow for a clear identification of the disparities existing between the Roma population and the general population. Furthermore, information regarding the situation of Roma women, Roma children, and Roma refugees remains limited or fragmented.

The report is based on both official data and public documents, as well as information collected directly from Roma communities through consultations and the documentation of individual cases. Although this information provides a valuable perspective on the realities on the ground, it cannot substitute the need to develop efficient institutional mechanisms for collecting and analyzing disaggregated data, in accordance with international standards on human rights and personal data protection.

The lack of complete and updated data represents, in itself, a structural problem that affects the authorities' capacity to develop, implement, and monitor evidence-based public policies, as well as to evaluate their impact on Roma communities. This situation has been repeatedly signaled by international human rights monitoring mechanisms and continues to constitute a major obstacle in ensuring inclusive and equitable development.

Despite these limitations, the information presented in the report allows for the identification of systemic trends and issues that affect the exercise of fundamental rights by Roma women, Roma children, and Roma persons in refugee situations, providing a solid basis for formulating recommendations addressed to national authorities and development partners.

IV. GENERAL CONTEXT

Roma women and children continue to represent one of the most vulnerable groups in the Republic of Moldova, being affected by multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination generated by ethnic belonging, descent, gender, poverty, low level of education, and limited

access to public services. These vulnerabilities are amplified by persistent social exclusion and structural barriers that hinder the effective exercise of fundamental rights, including the right to education, health, adequate housing, social protection, and participation in public life.

The situation is even more difficult for Roma refugees from Ukraine, who face additional obstacles in accessing protection and essential services. The lack of identity documents, difficulties in obtaining temporary protection, language barriers, limited access to information, and the persistence of ethnic stereotypes contribute to an increased risk of exclusion and marginalization. Despite general measures adopted to manage the refugee flow, the specific needs of Roma refugees remain insufficiently reflected in public policies and programs.

The UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD), in its Concluding Observations on the Republic of Moldova adopted in 2024, found that the implementation of policies and programs aimed at Roma inclusion remains affected by structural deficiencies. Among the main concerns highlighted are insufficient resources allocated to the implementation of measures, the lack of effective monitoring and accountability mechanisms, and the limited capacity of the community mediation system. These deficiencies reduce the access of Roma communities to public services and limit effective dialogue between authorities and beneficiaries.

The persistence of these problems has led the authorities of the Republic of Moldova to initiate the development of a new Program for the support of the Roma population for the 2027–2030 period, which aims to strengthen social inclusion, develop the network of community mediators, combat discrimination, and improve access to education, health, employment, and social protection.

These deficiencies have a direct impact on the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. Persistent poverty and limited access to social protection measures affect progress under SDG 1. Inequalities in access to medical services and maternal and child health services hinder reaching the targets assumed through SDG 3. Existing barriers in access to early education, the phenomenon of school dropout, and educational segregation practices continue to affect the achievement of SDG 4. Roma women and girls continue to face multiple discrimination and limited access to educational, economic, and protection service opportunities, which compromises progress in achieving SDG 5. At the same time, the persistence of structural inequalities and the absence of effective measures to combat intersectional discrimination directly affect the implementation of SDG 10 regarding the reduction of inequalities.

In the absence of systemic, coordinated, and adequately funded interventions, social exclusion and discrimination continue to be transmitted across generations, disproportionately affecting

Roma women, children, and youth. This situation limits the Republic of Moldova's capacity to ensure the effective implementation of the "Leave No One Behind" principle and to fulfill its commitments assumed under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and international human rights treaties.

V. SDG 4 – QUALITY EDUCATION

Access of Roma children and Roma refugee children to education

Education represents one of the areas where inequalities between the Roma population and the general population in the Republic of Moldova continue to be the most pronounced. Despite progress recorded at the national level regarding access to education, Roma children, especially Roma girls and Roma refugee children from Ukraine, continue to face structural barriers that limit the effective exercise of the right to education.

Available data show the existence of significant disparities starting from the early education stage. According to UNICEF Moldova, only one in five Roma children attends an early education institution, compared to approximately four out of five children from the non-Roma population. Low participation in preschool education affects the development of children's cognitive and social skills and contributes to the perpetuation of educational gaps throughout the entire learning cycle.

Educational exclusion continues in compulsory education as well. UNICEF notes that only about half of Roma children are enrolled in primary and lower secondary education, compared to about 90% of children from the general population. These disparities are determined by persistent poverty, housing insecurity, lack of identity documents, seasonal migration, discrimination, and the low level of parental education.

In 2024, the monitoring of the Support Program for the Roma population highlighted that only 43% of Roma children aged between 7 and 16 were enrolled in general education institutions in the monitored localities, and participation in preschool education was approximately 39%. These data demonstrate that the measures adopted so far have not produced sufficient changes to reduce educational gaps.

The situation is even more difficult for Roma refugee children from Ukraine. Civil society organizations and community mediators have reported difficulties related to the lack of identity documents, language barriers, frequent family mobility, and the insufficiency of support

measures adapted to their specific needs. In practice, these obstacles reduce school participation and increase the risk of educational dropout.

Roma girls are disproportionately affected by educational exclusion. Traditional gender norms, domestic responsibilities, early marriages and unions, as well as the lack of mentoring and educational support programs contribute to early school leaving. UNICEF has highlighted the existence of a direct link between early marriages and the school dropout of Roma girls, a phenomenon that limits their long-term economic opportunities and social participation.

The UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) and other international monitoring mechanisms have expressed concerns regarding the limited access of Roma to education and have recommended that the Republic of Moldova intensify measures to prevent school dropout, combat educational segregation, and expand school inclusion programs for Roma children.

The persistence of these inequalities affects the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 4 on ensuring inclusive, equitable, and quality education for all. At the same time, the impact extends to SDG 1 on poverty reduction, SDG 5 on gender equality, and SDG 10 on reducing inequalities, demonstrating the interdependent nature of the challenges faced by Roma communities.

Main findings

1. The participation of Roma children in early education remains approximately four times lower than in the case of non-Roma children.
2. Enrollment and retention rates in the educational system are considerably lower among Roma children.
3. Roma girls are at an increased risk of early school dropout.
4. Refugee Roma children continue to face administrative and linguistic barriers in accessing education.
5. Existing educational inclusion measures are not sufficiently funded and monitored.

VI. SDG 3 – HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Access of Roma women and Roma children to health services

Equal access to quality medical services is an essential condition for achieving Sustainable Development Goal no. 3 regarding ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all people. However, Roma women and children in the Republic of Moldova continue to face significant barriers in accessing health services, a situation aggravated in the case of Roma refugees from Ukraine.

Available data indicate the existence of persistent inequalities between the Roma population and the general population regarding access to medical services, prevention, and health insurance. According to studies conducted by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and UNICEF Moldova, a significant part of the Roma population encounters difficulties in accessing medical services due to poverty, lack of identity documents, indirect costs associated with treatment, and distance from medical institutions.

Mapping of localities densely populated by Roma has highlighted that access to medical services is considerably lower in communities where Roma community mediators do not operate. In these localities, the Roma population encounters difficulties in registering with a family doctor, accessing prevention programs, and using specialized medical services.

The situation is even more difficult for Roma refugees from Ukraine. Civil society organizations have reported difficulties related to obtaining necessary documents, accessing the health insurance system, and understanding administrative procedures. Language barriers and the lack of accessible information limit the use of health services and increase the risk of exclusion from the medical system.

Roma women's health and access to reproductive health services

Roma women continue to face significant obstacles in accessing sexual and reproductive health services. According to UN Women and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), socioeconomic factors, low levels of information, and gender stereotypes limit Roma women's access to family planning services, gynecological consultations, and prenatal monitoring.

In vulnerable communities, pregnant women less frequently undergo recommended medical check-ups, and access to specialized services is limited by transport costs and the lack of medical infrastructure in proximity. These barriers contribute to maintaining significant disparities in maternal and child health.

The UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) have recommended that the Republic of Moldova adopt additional measures to eliminate structural discrimination affecting Roma women's access to medical and reproductive health services.

Roma children's health

Roma children continue to be affected by limited access to preventive medical services, including vaccination, pediatric monitoring, and mental health services. UNICEF has signaled that the low level of access to medical services in Roma communities affects the healthy development of children and contributes to the perpetuation of social inequalities.

Precarious living conditions, poverty, and food insecurity increase the risk of health problems among Roma children. In the case of refugee Roma children, traumatic experiences associated with armed conflict, forced displacement, and social exclusion increase the need for access to mental health services and specialized psychosocial support.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has emphasized that vulnerable groups, including refugees and ethnic minorities, must benefit from specific measures to ensure effective access to medical services and prevention programs.

Impact on the achievement of SDG 3

The persistence of these inequalities demonstrates that Roma women and children continue to be left behind in the implementation process of the 2030 Agenda. Limited access to medical services, reproductive health, vaccination, and psychosocial support directly affects the achievement of SDG 3 and negatively influences progress under SDG 1 on poverty reduction, SDG 5 on gender equality, and SDG 10 on reducing inequalities.

In the absence of targeted measures and adequate funding, the existing gaps between the Roma population and the general population risk widening, perpetuating social exclusion and intergenerational vulnerability.

Main findings

1. Roma women and children continue to face significant barriers in accessing medical services.
2. Lack of identity documents and poverty represent major obstacles to health access.
3. Roma women face increased difficulties in accessing sexual and reproductive health services.

4. Roma children and refugee Roma children insufficiently benefit from preventive and mental health services.
5. Access to medical services is better in communities where Roma community mediators are active.

VII. SDG 11 – SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

Adequate housing and access to infrastructure for Roma women and children

Access to adequate housing and basic infrastructure represents one of the most persistent challenges faced by Roma communities in the Republic of Moldova. Although the right to an adequate standard of living is guaranteed by international human rights instruments and recognized within Sustainable Development Goal no. 11, numerous Roma families continue to live in precarious conditions, characterized by a lack of access to essential public services, housing insecurity, and territorial exclusion.

According to the Report on the mapping of densely populated Roma settlements in the Republic of Moldova, numerous Roma households are located in peripheral or segregated areas, where access to drinking water, sewage, natural gas, and road infrastructure is significantly lower than for the general population. These conditions directly affect the health, education, and economic opportunities of community members, contributing to the perpetuation of poverty and social exclusion.

In many localities, homes occupied by Roma families are overcrowded and do not meet minimum safety and sanitation standards. Precarious living conditions disproportionately affect women and children, who spend more time in the household and are more exposed to the risks associated with the lack of basic services. The lack of running water and sewage negatively influences hygiene, health, and children's participation in the educational process.

Data collected during the monitoring process of the Support Program for the Roma population highlighted that access to infrastructure and public services differs significantly between

localities where there are coordinated interventions and those where local authorities do not implement specific measures. This demonstrates the existence of significant territorial disparities and the lack of a uniform approach at the national level.

The situation of Roma refugees from Ukraine

For Roma refugees from Ukraine, housing-related problems are even more pronounced. Civil society organizations have documented cases where refugee Roma families encountered difficulties in accessing accommodation, being affected by discrimination, lack of documents, and insufficient support mechanisms adapted to their specific needs.

In many situations, refugee families were forced to live in overcrowded temporary spaces, with limited access to basic services and without guarantees regarding long-term housing stability. This insecurity affects social integration, children's access to education, and the ability of adults to access employment opportunities.

The UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) and other international bodies have emphasized the obligation of states to ensure equal access to housing and public services for all persons, including ethnic minorities and refugees.

Impact on Roma women and children

Precarious housing conditions disproportionately affect Roma women and children. The lack of basic infrastructure generates increased health risks, limits access to education, and amplifies economic vulnerability. Roma women are often responsible for managing household activities and directly bear the consequences of the lack of water, energy, and municipal services.

For children, poor housing conditions contribute to school absenteeism, learning difficulties, and health problems. UNICEF and other international organizations have highlighted the direct link between housing conditions and the realization of children's rights, including the right to education, health, and harmonious development.

Impact on the achievement of SDG 11

The persistence of disparities regarding housing and infrastructure demonstrates that many Roma communities continue to be excluded from the benefits of sustainable development. The lack of access to basic public services affects the achievement of SDG 11 regarding the development of inclusive, safe, and sustainable communities, while also having negative effects on SDG 1 regarding poverty reduction, SDG 3 regarding health and well-being, SDG 4 regarding education, and SDG 10 regarding the reduction of inequalities.

In the absence of systematic investments and public policies oriented towards inclusion, precarious housing conditions will continue to perpetuate social exclusion and limit the development opportunities of future generations.

Main findings

1. Many Roma families continue to live in conditions below the minimum standards of adequate housing.
2. Access to drinking water, sewage, and other public services is lower in Roma communities than in the general population.
3. Women and children are disproportionately affected by precarious living conditions.
4. Roma refugees from Ukraine face additional difficulties in accessing safe and stable housing.
5. Territorial disparities and the lack of local investments contribute to the perpetuation of social exclusion.

VIII. SDG 10 AND SDG 16 – REDUCING INEQUALITIES, COMBATING DISCRIMINATION AND ACCESS TO JUSTICE

Structural discrimination and social exclusion of the Roma

Despite the progress made by the Republic of Moldova in strengthening the regulatory framework on equality and non-discrimination, Roma continue to face persistent forms of structural discrimination that affect the effective exercise of fundamental rights. Discrimination based on ethnic origin continues to influence access to education, health, employment, housing, and public services, contributing to the perpetuation of social exclusion and intergenerational inequalities.

The UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) has expressed concern regarding the persistence of negative stereotypes and discriminatory discourse against Roma, as well as the limited impact of measures adopted to combat discrimination. In the 2024 Concluding Observations, the Committee found that Roma continue to be one of the groups most affected by social exclusion and discrimination in the Republic of Moldova.

Roma women are exposed to multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, determined simultaneously by ethnic belonging, gender, socio-economic status, and the low level of participation in decision-making processes. This situation affects their access to education, medical services, employment, and protection against violence and discrimination.

In the case of Roma refugees from Ukraine, ethnic discrimination intersects with vulnerabilities associated with refugee status, amplifying the difficulties of access to services, protection, and social integration. Civil society organizations have documented cases where Roma refugees have faced differential treatment in accessing services and support mechanisms available to displaced persons.

Access to justice and effective remedies

Access to justice is an essential condition for achieving Sustainable Development Goal no. 16 on promoting peaceful, just, and inclusive societies. However, many Roma continue to face difficulties in accessing legal protection mechanisms and effective remedies against discrimination.

Among the main barriers identified are the lack of information regarding rights and available protection mechanisms, low levels of trust in public institutions, financial constraints, and limited access to qualified legal assistance. These obstacles disproportionately affect Roma women, the elderly, and people living in isolated communities.

Although the Republic of Moldova has a relevant legislative framework, including Law no. 121/2012 on ensuring equality and specialized institutional mechanisms for examining discrimination cases, the low number of complaints filed by Roma people indicates the existence of persistent barriers in accessing these mechanisms.

In numerous cases documented by Roma organizations and human rights institutions, people affected by discrimination do not notify the competent authorities due to a lack of trust in the effectiveness of the procedures or fear of potential negative consequences.

Roma participation in decision-making processes

The effective participation of Roma in decision-making processes remains limited, especially at the local level. Although the national regulatory framework provides for consultation and participation mechanisms, the representation of Roma in public institutions and policy-making processes continues to be low.

According to studies on the political participation of Roma in the Republic of Moldova, Roma communities are insufficiently represented in decision-making structures, and the participation of

Roma women is even more reduced. This situation limits the ability of communities to influence policies that affect them in a direct way and contributes to the perpetuation of measures insufficiently adapted to the real needs of the Roma population.

Roma community mediators play an important role in facilitating dialogue between communities and authorities. However, CERD noted that the number of community mediators remains insufficient, and the sustainability of the mechanism is affected by limited funding and the lack of a consolidated institutional framework.

Impact on the achievement of SDG 10 and SDG 16

The persistence of discrimination and limited access to justice demonstrate the existence of structural obstacles to the realization of the principle of equality and the 2030 Agenda commitment to leave no one behind. The inequalities faced by Roma directly affect the implementation of SDG 10 on reducing inequalities and SDG 16 on promoting effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions.

In the absence of effective measures to combat discrimination, strengthen access to justice, and increase Roma participation in decision-making processes, social exclusion and marginalization will continue to affect the development of Roma communities and the exercise of fundamental rights.

Main findings

1. Roma continue to face structural discrimination in multiple areas of social life.
2. Roma women are affected by multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination.
3. Roma refugees from Ukraine face increased risks of exclusion and discrimination.
4. Access to justice and protection mechanisms against discrimination remains limited.
5. The participation of Roma, especially Roma women, in decision-making processes is insufficient.
6. The Roma community mediator system continues to be underfunded and insufficiently developed.

IX. SDG 8 – DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

Roma access to employment and economic opportunities

Labor market participation represents one of the main challenges faced by Roma communities in the Republic of Moldova. Although the national regulatory framework guarantees equal opportunities in employment and prohibits discrimination in labor relations, Roma continue to face structural barriers that limit access to stable jobs, decent working conditions, and economic development opportunities.

According to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD), the Roma population continues to be disproportionately affected by poverty, unemployment, and social exclusion, despite the existence of national programs dedicated to the inclusion of this community. The low level of education, discrimination in the labor market, lack of professional qualifications, and limited access to economic opportunities contribute to maintaining the gaps between the Roma population and the general population.

Available data indicate that numerous Roma individuals work in the informal economy, without employment contracts and without access to social protection or social insurance. This situation particularly affects people living in isolated communities and families in situations of extreme vulnerability.

The situation of Roma women in the labor market

Roma women face multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination that limit their economic participation. Ethnic belonging, gender stereotypes, low levels of education, and family responsibilities lead to significantly lower employment rates compared to both Roma men and women from the majority population.

UN Women and the United Nations Development Programme have highlighted that Roma women are overrepresented in informal and low-paid economic activities, with limited access to vocational training, employment services, and entrepreneurship programs.

In many communities, Roma women face difficulties in finding employment opportunities due to direct or indirect discrimination by employers. Furthermore, the lack of accessible childcare services and the unequal distribution of family responsibilities affect their ability to fully

participate in the labor market.

Roma youth and labour market transition

Young Roma face significant challenges in the transition from education to employment. High school dropout rates and low participation in vocational and higher education limit their access to stable, well-paid jobs.

Studies conducted within Roma communities indicate that young people are at heightened risk of unemployment and economic inactivity. A lack of specialized programs for mentoring, career guidance, and labor market integration contributes to the perpetuation of economic and social exclusion.

This situation is further exacerbated for young Roma refugees from Ukraine, who simultaneously face language barriers, administrative hurdles, and limited access to economic integration programs.

Entrepreneurship and economic inclusion

Although there are positive examples of Roma entrepreneurs and successful community initiatives, Roma access to finance, economic development programs, and business support services remains limited. A lack of financial collateral, low levels of financial literacy, and institutional discrimination curtail opportunities for independent economic development.

International organizations have highlighted the need to develop programs dedicated to social and economic entrepreneurship within Roma communities, including measures to support Roma women and young people in initiating and developing income-generating activities.

Impact on the achievement of the SDGs 8

The economic exclusion of Roma directly affects the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal no. 8 regarding the promotion of sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.

The persistence of discrimination in the labor market, limited access to education and professional training, as well as low participation in formal economic activities contribute to the perpetuation of poverty and social exclusion. These challenges also influence the achievement of SDG 1 on poverty eradication, SDG 5 on gender equality and SDG 10 on reducing inequalities.

In the absence of specific measures and sustained investments in the economic inclusion of Roma, existing gaps will continue to limit the economic and social development of Roma

communities.

Main findings

1. Roma continue to face structural barriers in accessing the labor market.
2. The level of formal employment among the Roma population remains low compared to the general population.
3. Roma women are affected by multiple discrimination and have limited access to economic opportunities.
4. Young Roma face increased difficulties in the transition from education to employment.
5. Informal work and the lack of social protection continue to affect a significant number of Roma people.
6. Access to entrepreneurship and economic development programs is insufficient.

X. SDG 1 – NO POVERTY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

Poverty and social exclusion among Roma communities

Poverty continues to disproportionately affect Roma communities in the Republic of Moldova and is one of the main causes of social exclusion. Low employment levels, limited access to education, poor housing conditions and insufficient access to public services contribute to the perpetuation of the economic vulnerability of Roma families.

The UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) found that Roma continue to be affected by persistent poverty and limited access to economic and social opportunities. In many communities, Roma families depend on social benefits, informal work, and unstable sources of income.

Roma women, single-parent families, and the elderly are at an increased risk of poverty. For Roma refugees from Ukraine, economic difficulties are amplified by a lack of financial resources, limited access to the labor market, and dependence on humanitarian assistance mechanisms.

Main findings

1. Poverty continues to disproportionately affect Roma communities.
2. Roma women and Roma children are among the most vulnerable groups.

3. Access to social protection measures remains unequal.
4. Economic exclusion contributes to the perpetuation of poverty across generations.

XI. SDG 5 – GENDER EQUALITY AND COMBATING VIOLENCE AGAINST ROMA WOMEN AND GIRLS

Roma women and girls between discrimination and exclusion

Roma women and girls face multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, determined by ethnic background, gender, and socio-economic status. These inequalities affect access to education, medical services, employment, public participation, and protection against violence.

Available data show that Roma women have lower levels of economic and educational participation compared to the general population. In some communities, practices such as early marriages and unions persist, which affect girls' right to education and personal development.

Gender-based violence remains an underreported phenomenon in Roma communities. Cultural barriers, lack of information, economic dependence, and limited access to specialized services reduce the possibility for women to seek protection and support.

CEDAW and CERD have recommended that the Republic of Moldova develop specific measures to combat intersectional discrimination and to increase the participation of Roma women in economic, social, and political life.

Achieving SDG 5 is essential for reducing poverty, improving health, and strengthening the social inclusion of Roma communities.

Main findings

1. Roma women continue to be affected by multiple discrimination.
2. Roma girls are at increased risk of school dropout and early marriage.
3. Access to protection services against violence is limited.
4. The participation of Roma women in decision-making processes remains low.
5. Specific measures are needed to combat intersectional discrimination.

XIII. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Ensure the systematic collection of data disaggregated by ethnicity, gender, age, and refugee status to monitor progress on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.
2. Adopt and effectively implement the new Support Program for the Roma population for the 2027–2030 period, with the allocation of necessary financial and human resources.
3. Strengthen the system of Roma community mediators by increasing the number of positions, ensuring sustainable funding, and institutionalizing this mechanism at the national level.
4. Develop specific programs to increase the participation of Roma children in early education, prevent school dropout, and reduce educational segregation.
5. Expand Roma women's access to sexual and reproductive health services, services for preventing gender-based violence, and economic support programs.
6. Improve Roma communities' access to medical services, including by developing community and mobile services in rural and isolated localities.
7. Development and implementation of programs dedicated to Roma employment, with emphasis on women and youth, including through vocational training, mentoring and support for entrepreneurship.
8. Increasing Roma families' access to adequate housing, basic infrastructure and essential public services, including water, sewage and energy.
9. Strengthening measures to combat discrimination and hate speech against Roma, including through training for public officials and professionals in the fields of education, health and justice.
10. Ensuring effective access for Roma to legal aid and effective remedies in cases of discrimination and human rights violations.
11. Developing specific measures for the inclusion of Roma refugees from Ukraine, including in the fields of education, health, employment and housing.
12. Increasing the participation of Roma women and men in local and national decision-making processes and systematic consultation of representative Roma organizations in the development of public policies.
13. Integrating a gender perspective and an intersectional approach into all policies and programs aimed at Roma inclusion.
14. Full implementation of the recommendations formulated by the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD), the CEDAW Committee, the Committee on the Rights of the Child and other relevant international mechanisms.
15. Establishing a transparent mechanism for monitoring and evaluating the progress made in

implementing measures aimed at Roma inclusion, with the participation of civil society organizations and representatives of Roma communities.