



2015

[STUDY] POWER MAP OF SOROCA

Republic of Moldova

[PRE - LOCAL ELECTIONS]

LETITIA MARK
[International consultant]



SOROCA – “The Kingdom of the Roma”

POWER MAP – REPUBLIC of MOLDOVA

The **general aim** of the mission was the empowerment of Romani women and girls in the context of the Parliamentary and local elections in 2014-2015. The mission featured consultative meetings with Government representatives, CSOs, Roma community mediators, Romani women and girls, the UN Agencies and other international development partners working in the area of human rights, women rights, gender equality, minority rights and Roma issues.

There are no available precise figures regarding the number of Roma living in the Republic of Moldova, which continues to pose challenges when discussing policies and programmes on Roma. There are big discrepancies between the data of the census in 2014, which points to 12,271 Roma, the data collected by the Bureau of Interethnic Relations, which suggest that the figure is closer to 20,000, and claims by Roma leaders who claim that up to 250,000 Roma live in the Republic of Moldova (see *UNDP Report: Roma in the Republic of Moldova*).

Roma citizens live dispersed around the whole country and can be found in big clusters in such localities as Chisinau, Otaci, Soroca, Balti, Edinet, Drochia, Riscani, Orhei, Calarasi, Strasenii, Nisporeni, Comrat, Ciadir-Lunga and Tiraspol (situated in the Transdnestrian region) (see *Submission of the Roma National Center to the ODIHR Assessment Team*). Results of the UNDP survey in 2007 demonstrate that, despite the prevailing stereotype of the Roma nomadic way of life, there are very few Roma households (15%) which were newly established households in their respective localities during the last 15 years and no clear migration pattern has been observed.

The Roma people in Moldova continue to be one of the most vulnerable groups. They face a higher risk of marginalization by state authorities as well as non-state actors as a result of their under-representation in decision-making, high level of illiteracy and unemployment and the existence of social stigma and negative prejudices. This was also confirmed by 2011 CERD Committee concluding recommendations in which there is expressed “concern about the continued marginalization and precarious socio– economic situation of members of this minority, and the discrimination they are faced, including in the fields of education, housing, health and employment” (see *Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination*).

At the request of the Ministry of Labor, Social Protection and Family, UNDP Moldova carried out a mapping of the settlements that are densely populated by Romani people in order to determine the number of Roma population and the number of necessary mediators. According to the estimations, it is deemed necessary to deploy Roma community mediators in about 48 localities inhabited mainly by Roma people (*Sociologic study, Monitoring participation of women and vulnerable groups at local elections, 2011*).

The Action Plan on Roma support for 2011 – 2015 was approved by the Moldovan Government on 8 July 2011 and subsequently amended on 31 January 2012. The Action Plan has been developed by the Moldovan authorities, including relevant line ministries and the Roma civil society. Moreover, international stakeholders such as the UN agencies, the EU Delegation to Moldova and the OSCE/ODIHR have provided their expertise to the drafting process of the Action Plan.

The Action Plan focuses on the prioritization of social inclusive measures in seven key areas:

- promoting services of social-community mediators;
- education;
- employment and economic welfare;
- health and social security;
- culture and media;
- public administration, public order and documentation;
- housing;
- consultations with Roma NGOs, including women

Some concrete steps have been taken by the authorities to tackle the actual problems and still existing stereotypes, negative attitudes and discrimination towards Roma people in different fields. Moldova created the system of Roma community mediators, one of the most positive developments put forward by the Action Plan implementation.

In 2013 a series of amendments to the legislation in force was adopted by the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova with respect to the institutionalization of Roma community mediators. Based on the Law of the Parliament no. 69 from 5 April 2013, the local Council of I level was given a new power to decide on the establishment of the Community mediator in the appropriate place.

Based on the Decision No. 557 of 17 July 2013 the Government approved the Framework Regulation on the employment modalities and organization of the activity of community

mediators in compact and/or mixed communities populated by Roma. As at December 2014 there were officially 24 community mediators within 23 Roma communities. In the context of decentralization process, since January 2015 the Local Public Administration are in charge for mediators monthly salaries, allocated from the local annual budget. In February 2015 there were at least 3 Roma community mediators complaining that they did not receive the monthly salaries as a consequence of not being planned in the local budget. (During the 2 missions, I visited 15 localities and in 4 localities the mediators refused the jobs because of very difficult problems with City Hall and Roma issues that they could not find solutions, they were not supported by authorities, some of them do not have even a desk where they have to work).

Moldovan authorities have shown commitment to address health issues as one of the more urgent ones. In compliance with the provisions and the time schedule envisaged in the Roma Action Plan, a number of special mobile medical teams were constituted and are functional in order to provide basic health services in rural settlements situated away from medical institutions.

In the field of education, certain measures are taken to target some of the main reasons and causes for high level of illiteracy among Roma and poor participation of Roma children in the education cycles. Three Roma educational centers were established in Vulcanesti, Calarasi and Schinoasa.

Additionally, in order to facilitate the process of Roma's documentation with ID, according to Government Decision n. 497 from 6 July 2012, citizens of Roma ethnicity were exempted from fees for services for documentation with national ID and documents issued by Civil Registry for a period of 6 months starting from 1 October 2012.

Furthermore, various events, working groups and trainings provided by Roma representatives, including public debates, roundtables, discussion, specific trainings for the local public administration, awareness campaign to promote tolerance, national information campaigns for Roma are convened in Moldova on a permanent basis by different stakeholders.

A survey of UNDP Moldova (Chisinau, 2013) has provided the following findings:

„A significant gap in education and literacy levels between Roma and non-Roma. Compared with the rest of population, Roma have a much higher illiteracy rate, a much lower level of education, significantly lower enrolment in education and a higher drop-out rate. Roma education and literacy levels fall well short of the national average. Every fifth Roma cannot write and read, while a person with college or higher education is a rarity, this category constituting only 4% of the total Roma population in comparison with the non-Roma

population enrolment of 38%. The drop-out rates at schools and low enrolments among Roma children are of alarming proportions and raise the legitimate question: why is this happening?

The reasons for school non-attendance are both objective and subjective. From the objective point of view, Roma claim their lack financial capacity to support their children's education. There are also child health related problems and problems related to school infrastructure. From a subjective point of view parents invest little effort to encourage their children's education since many consider that the child has achieved the necessary level of education. Early marriages and perceived discrimination in schools are contributing factors. Another important factor that can influence the education process is the migration abroad of the entire family to find work.

Discrimination in schools, named as the reason for school drop-out in only 2% of cases, is considered by some Roma leaders as the main reason of school non-attendance. They perceive that the discrimination was and is still present in schools. "If you are Roma, people are not receptive to you just because you are Roma, and because there are stereotypes, and it takes some time, several years for you to prove you are not bad", stated one Roma leader. At the same time, survey findings show that the discrimination perceived is not "de facto". There are few education institutions with concentrations of only Roma children, thus avoiding the negative effects of segregation and discrimination attitudes concerning these children. Moreover, according to world practices, in the field of interethnic relations, segregation in education is not beneficial since it may lead to a more acute isolation and segregation of the minority."

Important numbers to take in consideration (UN report, 2013):

- **Roma girls and women are one of the most excluded group: 49% of the inhabitants of Moldova would not accept a Roma person as neighbor;**
- **45% of Roma girls and women from Moldova did not attend any school or formal education;**
- **59% of Roma population are at the edge of poverty;**
- **35% of the Roma population is children.**

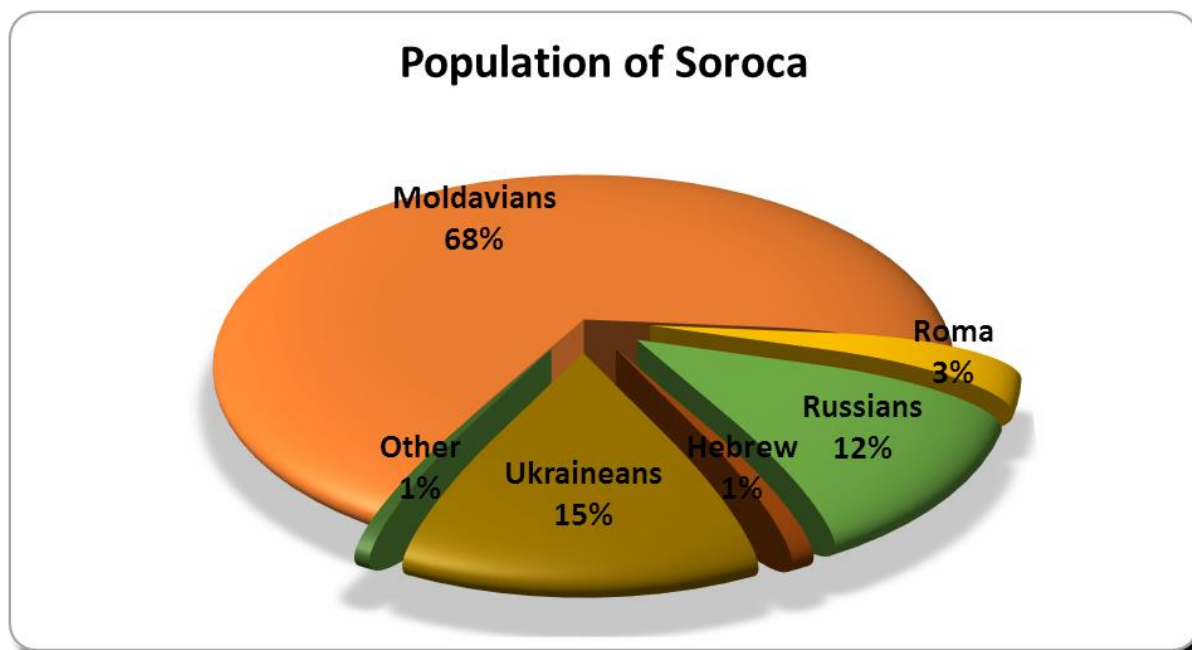
In this general context, Soroca, the "kingdom of the Roma" located in the North part of the country, features the largest concentration of Roma population. The traditional community can be considered an example of perpetuated multiple discrimination of Romani women. The cause for the multiple discrimination of Roma women is not only due to the patriarchal organization inside of Roma families and communities, this complex phenomenon is related

to the economic-social and political aspects of the region and the responsibilities of institutions and political decision makers. Roma in general, women and men, are excluded from decision making regarding even their rights as minority group.

The demography of Soroca, according to the City Hall of Soroca is made up as follows: there are 35,1 thousands of habitants, the majority Moldavians (68%), Ukrainians (15%), Russians (12,3%), Hebrew (1%), Roma (3%), and others (0,7%). The latest data regarding demography and education enrollment of Roma children in public schools are offered by Doina Galben, from Centre for Youngsters Dacia, Soroca and Steliana Imanverdievna, mediator, who work with this center within different projects targeted on Roma children inclusive and intercultural activities: at the last census, conducted on 1 January 2014, total population of Soroca was 37 526; the number of the Roma minority was **1525**.

The total of Roma school aged children is 278, out of those 84 are enrolled in schools. There is no gender disaggregated data available. The mediator informed that 82 children frequently attended the local school, but only 1 or 2 boys passed to secondary school (5-8 grade). Currently only one boy is enrolled in 7th grade. In the past only one Roma girl, Munteanu Roza, graduated the Faculty of Medicine, now she works as chirurgical doctor in Chisinau. The mayor of the City Hall is a woman, Elena Bodarenco, representative of PCRM, she is alone among a Local Council composed of only men representatives.

The unofficial data offered by the Roma leader during the meeting with community representative members of Soroca in November 2014 estimates the size of the Roma population at 3000 persons.



Soroca is considered “country of Roma” where visitors can see not only the renovated old fortified castle from XV century, but also the tourist attraction of the Hill of Gypsies with grandiose and colorful palaces, architecture and “copies” of a different buildings around the world, depending on owners’ imagination or wish to demonstrate their power after many years of nomadic “modus vivendi” as travelers or an accumulation of frustration.

Soroca was also attractive for media and tourists due to its legendary king, “Baron”- the famous ancestor of a clan who dominated from a Palace with soviet vestiges. His memory is until now annually honored by the large family at orthodox celebrations.

Description of the problem of early marriage

Roma traditional and patriarchal customs of early marriages have their roots in historical social constraints. During the centuries, in order to preserve the Roma identity, the customs were transmitted from one generation to another. Preserving a large family, as single form of organization and cultural practice, it was instrumental in order to oppose slavery, later on it was a key strategy to oppose different forms of assimilation and disintegration. The Romani family organization is based on the values of honor and familial prestige - as Pakiv- Pakivale, Barvale Roma and the antithesis of these terms: shame- Lashav, dirty- Mahrime, Prikasha- which in Romani culture means the worse things as: infortune, illness, death, and exclusion from the community.

It is easily observed that all these customs maintain the Roma family control over women/girls. Girls have to be clean- virgin at the time of marriage, and often the school is perceived as an unclean place where non-Roma could influence children in a negative way. Schools do not consider the old values. On the contrary it provides the opportunity for autonomy and may stimulate children to, despite their families, renege their ethnic identity and to become similar to non-Roma, finally to be assimilated. This is a great dilemma inside of Roma community and a long debate regarding this problem continues between modern, human and women/girls rights to self-determination advocates and the traditional “modus vivendi” conservatives. In all ex-communist countries with the largest number of Roma population, assimilation intensive programs were put in place. Communist regimes professed a total ignorance of Roma as an ethnic minority (in Romania for example it was forbidden to use the name of gypsies/ tsigannes/Roma even in anthropological research, or the books written in the last dictatorial period – see Satra of Zaharia Stancu, Veronica Huber- Basme Tsiganesti – edited after 50 years of interdiction, Dictionar de etnologie etc).

Concluding the preservation of the patriarchal Roma family and the phenomena of early marriage has its roots in historical practices and traditional values anchored in the Roma identity. At the same time these customs currently represent the major obstacle for the access of Roma girls and women to education and implicitly to emancipation, the realization of their fundamental rights, as children, young women or elders. It must be stressed however that the responsibility does not sit squarely on the patriarchal family organization, the institutions and the authorities, such as the school, the Department of Children Protection, other important national and international organizations which defend for the Human and Women Rights have a direct obligation to uphold the rights of women and children. Simply stating that such is the Roma culture and “they have their own customs” constitutes a failure by the state to uphold its obligation under international human rights law.

Early marriages constitute a grave violation of children’s rights and perpetuate the vicious circle of exclusion: no access at education→ marginalization→ dependence→ passivity and fatalism. The early marriages often have other grave consequences and are connected with domestic violence, trafficking of persons and slavery.

Power Map

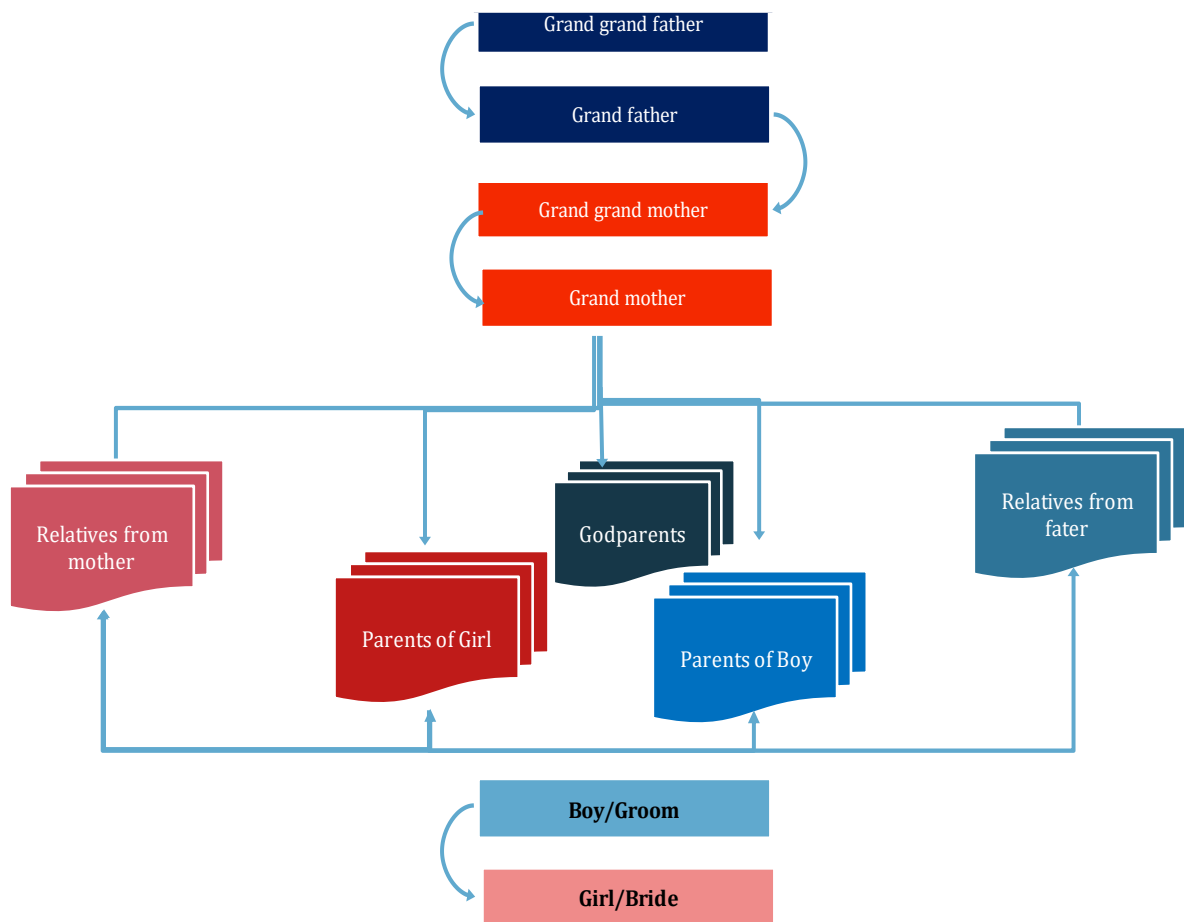
Factors of influences, decision makers regarding early marriages inside Roma communities:

- **Grand-grandfather** could be around 60-70 years old, “o purro Pappo”, could be the authority in the community: bulibasa or Krissnitor (judge). He has an important in RRomani Kriss, “Romani court”, his authority is based on wealth and prestige. The Roma community is relative young base on early marriages, from 13 years – boys, and 12 years girls- in group of “laiesi”- generic denomination for Romani language, but not only.
- **Grandfather**, the real chief of clan, “**pater familias**”, **O baro Pappo**, or simple “**Pappo**”
- **Grand –grandmother**, “**mammo**” is around 50-60 years old. She has authority regarding the knowledge and control of **ushi** , propriety, cleaning of family. She selects the girls to be married- future daughters in low- **I bori**. She decides inside the family all female related rules; female specific problems are controlled by her vigilance. She is often considered guilty for disorder in the family.
- **Grand Mother**
- **The parents of girls**, in same order as parents of boy- kanamika, relatives in low

This study was developed within the UN Programme "Women in Politics", implemented by the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), in partnership in partnership with East Europe Foundation (EEF) and the Centre "Partnership for Development" (CPD), with the financial support from the Government of Sweden

- Relatives-patrilineal- uncle- kako
- Relatives- matrilineal
- Godparents- nanasii- if they are Christians, other important members of community who participate at the ritual of request, arrangements of wedding, price of bride, responsibility and ritual of protocol.
- Groom – boy
- Bride- girls

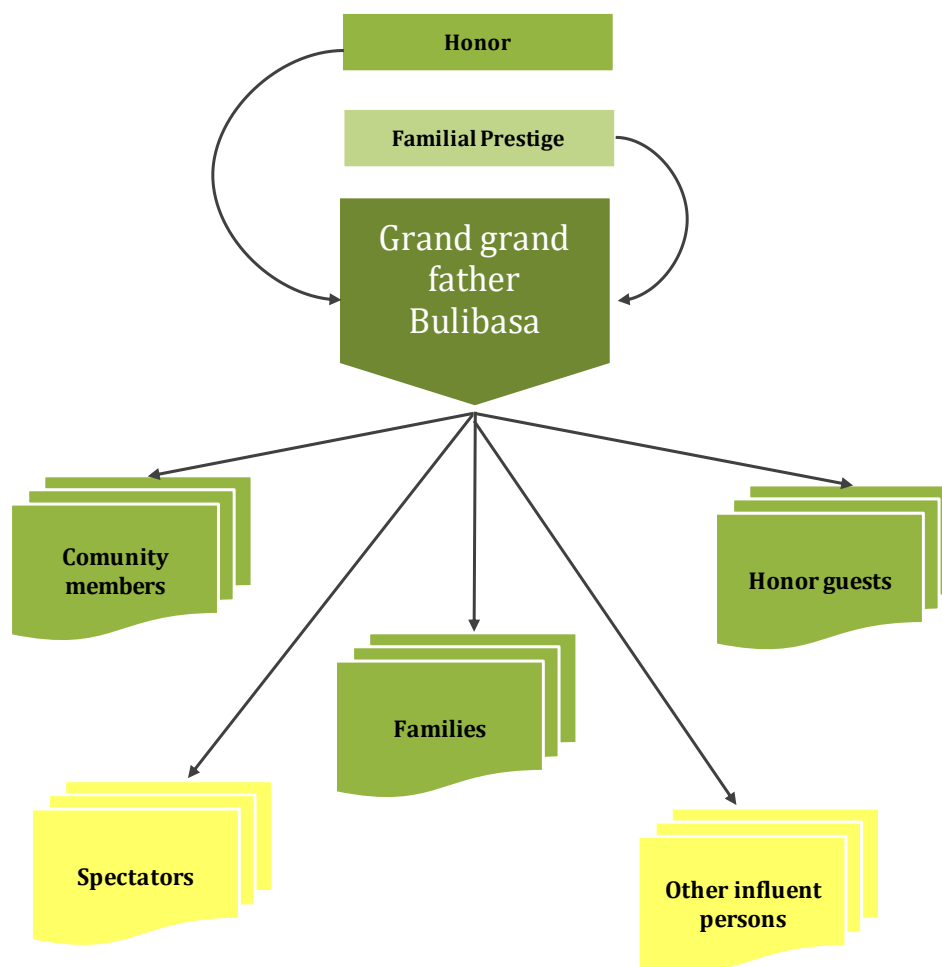
This hierarchy can be seen in the graphic representation below:



Individuals associated with the Groups

- Members of communities, other families who participate at rituals of marriage, at the ceremony which includes the demonstration of the “purity” of bride, controlled by the old females of the family,
- Honor guests, from authorities or guests, domestic participant, business colleagues of men,
- Other influent persons,
- People who participate as spectators.

This study was developed within the UN Programme "Women in Politics", implemented by the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), in partnership in partnership with East Europe Foundation (EEF) and the Centre "Partnership for Development" (CPD), with the financial support from the Government of Sweden



Map of all other associations with these individuals

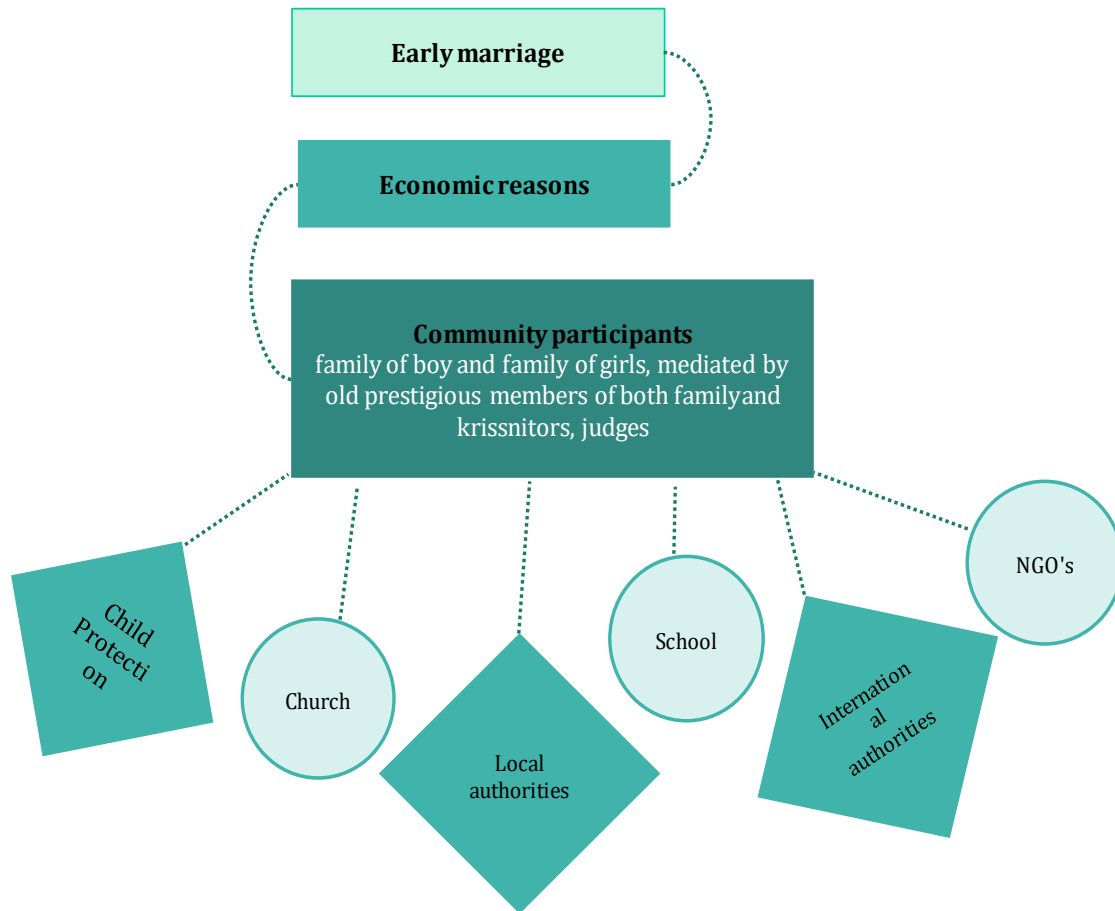
Others: Non-Roma institutions, Church, local authority, City Hall, schools, Roma or non-Roma NGOs, generally decision makers who have responsibility to apply and monitor the application of legislation, including the age of marriage, the respect for fundamental rights of children and women, gender equality, the rights regarding participation in public life and citizenship of Roma women.

Observation: by claiming that Roma have „their culture, their customs and traditional rules”, „de facto” there is no interference between decision makers at institutional level and decision makers inside of Roma traditional family. In these circumstances Roma women have no alternatives, practically they have to follow the rules imposed by the family.

- City Hall;
- Local authority;

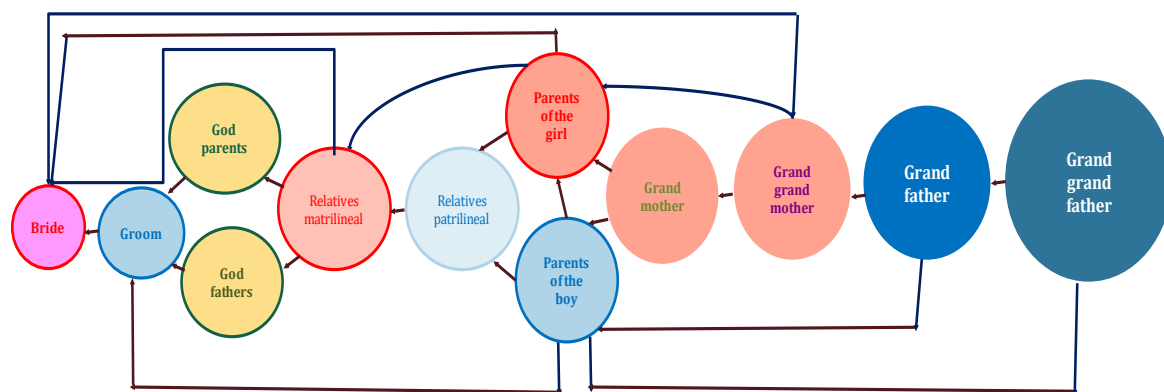
This study was developed within the UN Programme "Women in Politics", implemented by the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), in partnership in partnership with East Europe Foundation (EEF) and the Centre "Partnership for Development" (CPD), with the financial support from the Government of Sweden

- Church;
- Local institutions, Department of Child Protection;
- School;
- NGOs who defend the Human Rights, children, women;
- Responsible with application of legislations, as Gender Equality etc.;
- International organization.



Determining relational power lines

Power lines are between the elder men from both families and community, first of all, and in order, elder mothers, and prestigious families who know the rules of preservation of traditional customs named Romanipe.

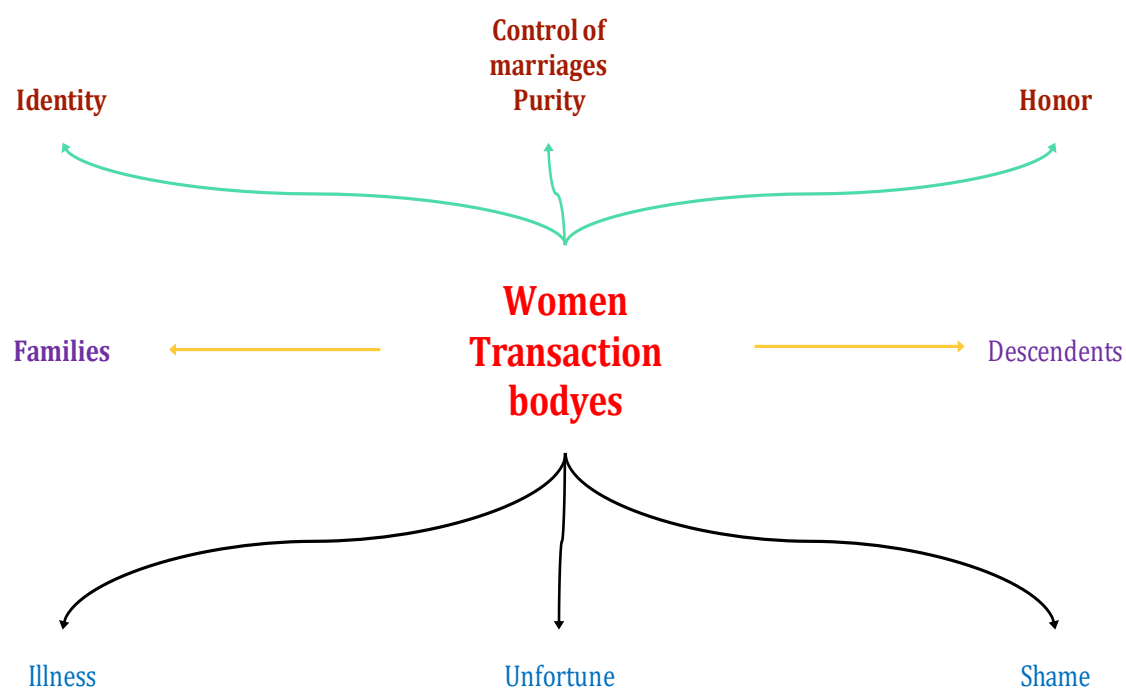


Target priority relationships

Relationships are targeted on patriarchal family preservation of IDENTITY by control of marriages and purity by means of Pakivale, HONOR. The opposite means SHAME, Lashav, and infortune: BIBAXT, with a lot of negative consequences, as illness.

In Romanipen, the Roma Culture, in the name of Pakivale- the Honor, if a Roma girl is not virgin at the marriage, this fact is made public after the consummation of the marriage, after the wedding. Such events cause a great scandal and may often result in violence against the young bride. Domestic violence lead to very dangerous acts and often the Police and social services do not intervene. In such cases nobody discusses about the aspects of violence, the trauma of Roma women, the psychological effects. A girl who is „Mahrimë” is considered to be a shameful situation for the family and will be excluded. She will, in the future, be avoided for marriages which means that no alliances between families would be possible and she will have no fortune in her future.

In conclusion, the female bodies are very important within transactions between families and rules are very strict to preserve the culture in order to have descendants, patrilinears, to go „may angle” further.



Conclusion and Recommendations

The objective is not to destroy the family values or to intervene by force within the Roma culture; any taken actions should be addressed with respect towards the fundamental rights of human beings and the fundamental rights of children. The authorities need to combat the marriages of children and the marriages of young women when they don't have the possibility to decide, to have alternative and first at all access to education. Recently in some communities the age of marriage is not 13- 14 for girls, according to the information from Soroca acquired from a Roma traditional family, that the age is 15-16 for girls. But the evidence from school attendance proves that is that girls attend only primary education (I- IV degrees). The parents decide that in school their children do not learn anything useful for their future: Commercial activities for boys and domestic activities for the girls such as house cleaning, food preparation, children birth and education in respect for family values and under the supervision of mother in law.

Identifying allies:

A first step is to identify allies among men and women leaders in the community whose voices are heard and respected. They can be found at the community level, as well as at the district or national level.

This study was developed within the UN Programme "Women in Politics", implemented by the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), in partnership in partnership with East Europe Foundation (EEF) and the Centre "Partnership for Development" (CPD), with the financial support from the Government of Sweden

While undertaken the two missions in Moldova, the following strategies have been applied in order to mitigate the risks which can affect the very traditional community:

1. Be very aware of the customs of Roma families who belong to traditional communities.
2. Work with a community mediator who is aware of the rules and customs in traditional families and is able to get in contact with the Romani families within the community. An important element is the ability of the mediator to speak in the languages used by the community, i.e. Romani, Russian, Romanian, etc. The mediator can be from the target community or a nearby community. The key point is that the mediator has had interactions with the target community. In the Republic of Moldova I have observed that while mediators are supposed to act as an interface between the community and the authority, often they find themselves in the situation they don't receive any support for the local authorities. They are not provided with a working space, clear instructions or the support within service providing, as such their effectiveness is seriously lacking in many communities.
3. Develop contacts with Roma civil society leaders who have good knowledge about the profile of the community they work in and they are also aware of the various cultural customs and communication habits.
4. Develop working relation with a Roma leader who is prestigious at the national or local/district level and can develop strategy to get in contact and initiate an open communication with the community. The person, who is usually a Roma man, is acquainted with the traditional groups and prestigious Roma families and is welcome everywhere. He is also connected to the modern life of young Roma leaders and respects both the old values and the modern generation of youth who pursue higher education and decided to be involved in Roma movement to defend human rights at the national and international level.

Pre-entry consultation:

It is important to organize consultations with the identified allies to jointly prepare an entry point in the community. During the consultations the main concerning issues need to be discussed. Furthermore somebody must identify the positions and views of the allies and help them to understand the issue better. The implementing team must clearly identify the key risks and put together a mitigation strategy relying on the community structures and persons, who might positively or negatively influence the process/decision in the community. It is important

to involve in such preparation consultations the local public authorities, representatives of women, when and if possible.

In case of Soroca, consultations with the mediator lead to get information about projects that have been implemented within the community. The mediator provided information about the Center for Youngsters „Dacia” and the project implemented for 15 Roma adolescents, boys and girls, aiming to promote intercultural programs. Looking for information about such projects can be served as an entry point. First of all, the community mediators arranged the possibilities to discuss with the traditional leaders of the community. A major risk was the perception of the team’s goal as being political. During the second mission it has also been raised suspicions that the team is trying to corrupt the traditions. The consultations revealed the need to communicate with Roma men, who are direct traditional leaders, and to organize meetings with the elder women in the community.

The consultation process involved meetings with the national experts, leaders of NGOs as well as with a Roma leader who assisted during the undertaken of the second mission. One meeting involved discussions with the leader the Roma Party in Moldova and member of the International Romani Union.

At the same time, training and empowering Romani women who work as community mediators to understand the objectives and motivation of the team was essential to get them on board on the project. The trainings and national media exposure contributed to this goal.

Entry into the community:

It was important to clarify that the team is conducting a needs assessment for the community focusing on socio-economic and political aspects. Once clarified both, men leaders and women from community proved to be more open to communicate and co-operate with the team. This was the key element that provided an entry into the community. As described in the report, it facilitated carrying out a meeting and discussion with the main Roma leader and with a group of 20 elder Romani women from Soroca as well as with other counterparts.

Follow up actions

It is crucial to further strengthen the position and role of the Community Mediator as an interface with the authorities. Authorities should give full support to the mediator’s activity.

This study was developed within the UN Programme "Women in Politics", implemented by the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), in partnership in partnership with East Europe Foundation (EEF) and the Centre "Partnership for Development" (CPD), with the financial support from the Government of Sweden

Furthermore the UN agencies in Moldova should maintain a permanent contact with the local mediator and Dacia Center.

There is a requirement to address the immediate needs of Romani women in the community as expressed during the meeting. Specifically these are related to social needs, including health services, social support and food.

Authorities and international stakeholders should consider the opportunity to establish a community centre focused on education support for children and adults. The community centre can support afterschool classes for Romani children and provide a space for Romani women to interact and discuss issues which affect them.

Authorities and NGOs working in the area should implement educational programs that also stress the idea of Roma women promotion. They can set up scholarship schemes, adopt positive or affirmative measures in education. Such programs should include measures that target the education of parents, education on civil rights and women's rights. Women in the community should be enabled to participate and develop self-confidence. An important element is that they have alternatives and protection in case of abuse and domestic violence, shelters, assistance and help.

The state institutions and local authorities must intervene in case of clear abuses (denial of access of education, fundamental rights of children, domestic violence) and apply the legislation in accordance to their responsibility. The parents' awareness about their responsibility towards the children and the legislation that protects the rights of children should be raised. In this sense information campaigns can be implemented with participation of all stakeholders.

All stakeholders should consider the opportunity to organize a National Conference in Soroca with participation of Roma leaders, those ones who are traditional-oriented and modern-oriented. The agenda should involve schools, kindergartens, Roma NGOs and public authorities. The thematic of the conference could be Access to Education and Cultural Rights.

Feedback

UN agencies and authorities should analyze the situation following the implementation of some of the concrete recommended activities in Soroca. At the initiative of the Roma Women Network, on 8 April, when it is celebrated the International Day of Roma, a National Conference can be organized to discuss particularly electoral participation and the role of voters in this process. The raising awareness within Soroca could be ensured through links

between elections and the decisions undertaken in the community (*see the presentation from the meeting with the Roma Women Network in Chisinau*). A meeting between voters and candidates can be organized.

The Roma Women Network should be significantly strengthened and enabled to organize lobby and advocacy activities. The Network should establish a Platform enabling consultations with the key institutions and political forces in Moldova. The Romani Women Network should acquire legal status and establish a secretariat that can apply and implement projects in the area of education, women empowerment, access to health, etc. Romani women mediators should be provided with a significant role within the network.

Overall more attention should be paid to the situation of communities. Often governmental data and information acquired from NGO partners can differ from the noticed situation. One example is the discrepancies between information regarding community mediators provided by official sources and the reality noticed while working with mediators.

The design and planning in project implementation should be preceded by needs assessment exercises that provide a clear picture of the needs and opportunities present in each community.

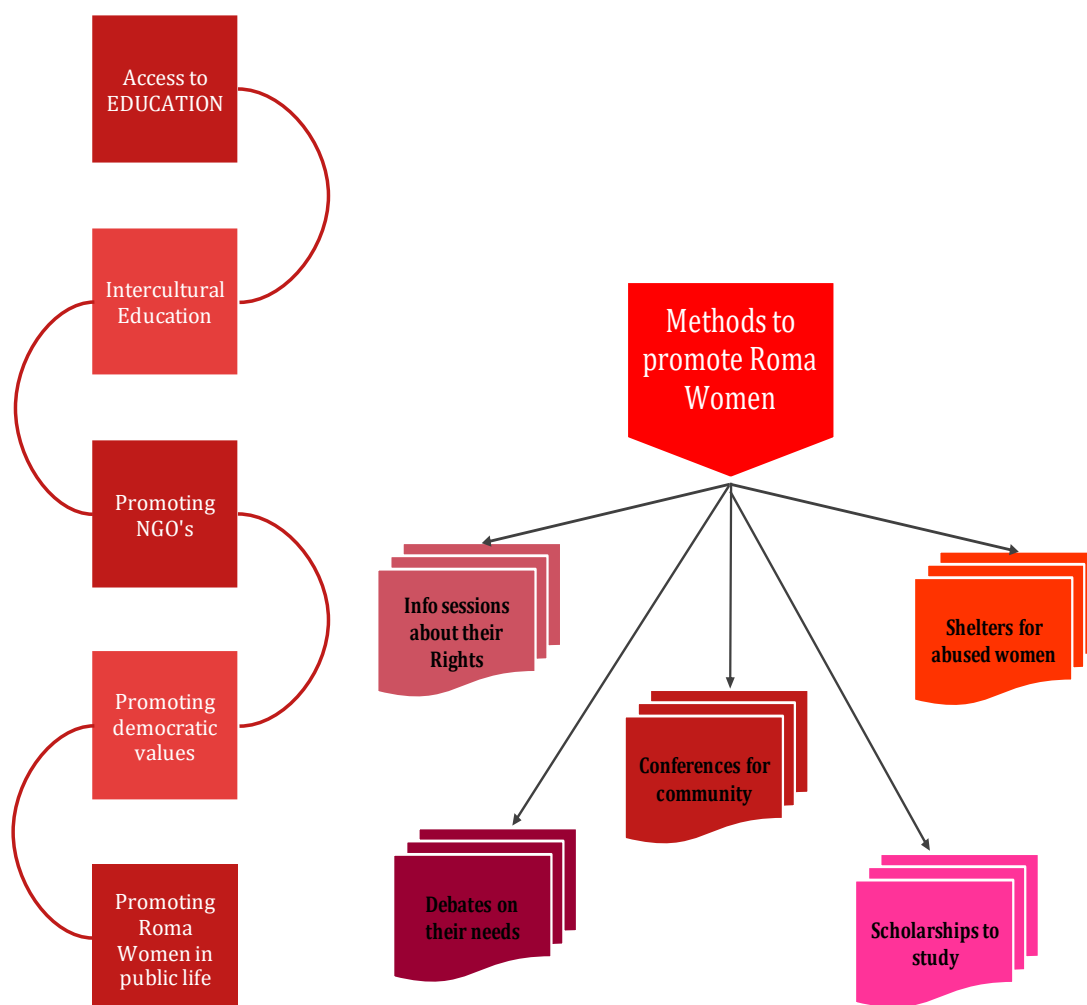
In the case of Soroca, opportunities arise from the fact that the Roma community is composed especially of young people and they can be motivated. The Roma population is large and relatively homogeneous. Roma community is multilingual and Roma leaders are interested in traditional preservation of cultural activities. Furthermore Soroca is led by a woman politician (the mayor in Soroca), who is open to new ways for interaction and an understanding of gender positive policies. The community also features an active NGO with a track record of activities (DACIA Cultural Center).

The Roma population in Soroca is business oriented and interested in such activities. Roma tradition encourages this approach and give ways for mobility.

The risks are posed by the fact that it is a community where customs and traditions that often infringe on human rights are present, as early and arranged marriages, early school drop-out and other educational barriers. The access of women –especially the young – to public life is significantly reduced. For the widows and elderly women the social situation is difficult. Patriarchal societies also exercise control over the community itself opposing initiative. Their access to social assistance and health is limited. At the same time there is not a single Roma women NGO active in Soroca.

At the same time addressing social needs can provide the best entry point into the community and will counter the opposition of the rich traditional leaders. The role of the mediator is crucial here in shifting or balancing leadership roles.

Women in the community can also see models of development presented by other Romani women who have gained success in the public space or as professionals. Success stories can help in changing views on education and modern alternatives to a traditional life style.



Objectives:

- Identify the key power structures and individuals, who influence girl marriage within Soroca community. For this, undertake a power mapping exercise in Soroca community in close consultation with UN Women Country Office and partnership with the community activists.
- Produce, within not more than 10 days following each mission, a usable mission report, detailing findings and recommendations for further action.

Summary:

The second visit to Soroca was conducted with the support of the local mediator, Steliana Imanverdieva. She does not have an office in the City Hall, so she organized the meeting in her own home. Initially at the meeting there have been present 9 Roma women and Steliana's family members. Later on the group increased up to 20 persons. Leaving the community, they thought that we were bringing help and products, so they came to complain about the lack of social support. They think this is happening because everybody thinks the community is rich, due to the empty villas from the "hill of palaces".



Example of the “empty palaces” in Soroca

The majority of the women who attended the meeting are old, with no support from the city hall, and Steliana attempted to help with (paper work) in order to receive social financial support.

This study was developed within the UN Programme "Women in Politics", implemented by the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), in partnership in partnership with East Europe Foundation (EEF) and the Centre "Partnership for Development" (CPD), with the financial support from the Government of Sweden

As a rule of the city hall, in order to receive the support, persons have to prove that they don't have any properties (land or house). It is really difficult to be qualified to receive financial support. There were also some young women, a young girl with small children and no husband, who asked help and pity from others. These women are discriminated based on all criteria (gender, age, ethnic, lack of education).



Some Roma women from Soroca, including Steliana Imanverdieva, the local mediator

As a recommendation for the local leader, who was also a local councilor, it can be that he should try to find a way to establish a social canteen for women, asking for support from the city hall.

Soroca is the object for more vast presentation because it is an important Roma area. Unfortunately the community mediator Steliana Imanverdieva cannot solve all the existing problems, being alone.

As a recommendation, there would be necessary to appoint 4 more mediators, taking into account the Roma population within the community. In order to be able to run for elections they need a special strategy and support from the city hall, due to the fact this is a much closed patriarchal community.

The area can be compared with Gagauzia, because Roma people living here are Russian oriented with patriarchal education and being very traditionalists. They are not open to let girls to attend schools. Women only have to take care of the family, children and traditions.

Old women are without any support, they are not protected by the families. Because of high rate of migrations among young people, poor economy and the conflict existing between pro-Russian communities and the other ones, the poor part of the society is the most affected.



Several Roma Women from Soroca, in need for social support

Bibliography

- <http://www.gov.md/ro/content/informatie-succinta-despre-petiitiile-adresate-guvernului-si-primirea-cetatenilor-audenta>
- www.ms.gov.md/.../raport_cu_privire_la_evaluarea_demografica_0.pdf
- ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demografia_Republicii_Moldova
- mpsfc.gov.md/file/rapoarte/Raport_Cartografiere_2012.pdf
- www.undp.md/.../roma%20.../UNDP,%20Romii%20in%20Republica
- www.unicef.org/moldova/ro/11941_25012.html

NOTE: The opinions expressed in this study are the author`s own and do not necessarily reflect the view of United Nations, UN Women, UNDP or of the donors.

This study was developed within the UN Programme "Women in Politics", implemented by the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), in partnership in partnership with East Europe Foundation (EEF) and the Centre "Partnership for Development" (CPD), with the financial support from the Government of Sweden