



PROGRAMUL DE COOPERARE ELVEȚIANO-ROMÂN
SWISS-ROMANIAN COOPERATION PROGRAMME

Reform Fund linked to the Inclusion of Roma and other Vulnerable Groups

HEKS consortium

Social inclusion and improvement of living conditions for Roma and other vulnerable groups in Mureș, Cluj and Bihor is the activity implemented in Romania by a Swiss-Romanian consortium led by HEKS Foundation in Switzerland (Hilfswerk der Evangelischen Kirchen der Schweiz) under the Reform Fund linked to the Inclusion of Roma and other Vulnerable Groups. Together with their four partners, (a) FAER Foundation (Foundation for promoting agriculture and regional economy), (b) Christian Foundation Diakonia located in Cluj county, (c) Diakonia in Covasna county and (d) Orthodox Philanthropy in Alba county, HEKS aim at enhancing social inclusion and improving the living conditions of those vulnerable by implementing an integrative approach in the fields of education, health and social assistance, employability, employment and income, and housing. The project is developed based on collaboration with both local authorities and with the beneficiaries, creating a participatory setting in which the needs and opinions of those vulnerable are included in an integrated strategy oriented towards increasing the living conditions in the communities.

The progress achieved so far is observable on all components. The education component is expanding due to new partnerships with local authorities, which contribute, on average, with more than a quarter of the total costs for educational activities. The education component is strengthened by interventions in the health and social assistance field, where the case management approach contributes to reaching a greater impact at family level. The pilot housing activity was coordinated with the employability, employment and income component which supported the beneficiaries to polish up their skills in constructions while also improving their own housing conditions, which leads to an increase in community empowerment. In the previous year, three Roma families accessed micro-credits and were financially and technically supported to start their businesses.

Another important achievement is the on-going collaboration with local authorities, which are recognised as partner with rights, as well as with responsibilities in the enhancement of community development. Nevertheless, a constant and close monitoring on the relation with

local institutions is performed, as sometimes there are delays in delivering the latter's part of the contractual agreement, as it was the case in the housing component. Given that the strengthening of the relationship with the local authorities is an on-going and, at times, a rather lengthy process and that there is a constant focus on improving the current set-up and replicating best practices, the achieved results are contributing to the illustration of an example of good practices.

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