

How to set your face against the bogeyman of majority perceptions

Strategic communication proposals for planning and delivering successful Roma inclusion programs at local level

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This paper presents the communication proposals crafted based on the research findings processed across four countries by a Central and Eastern European team and a communication-side analysis of the on-site Roma inclusion programs. These proposals will be supplemented, as they are linked to general communication considerations that can be gleaned from media and social psychology research and an analysis of Roma media representation within the region. We strived to formulate our proposals to allow their actual implementation by users, primarily municipal and government decision-makers, by using language and illustrative examples to help identify situations. This format necessarily requires simplification, for which we provide explanations in our footnotes.

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Here you will see that every project is different due to the many variables, which encircle the potential interventions. However it will also become clear that by understanding the less but significant similarities and being familiar with the local circumstances successful actions can be planned and delivered.

Chapter 1 – The starting points – Page 11

This chapter will draw your attention to the fact that communication is not everything. To gain success it is obviously crucial to have a strongly based inclusion program, however you will also see those decision preparation dilemmas, which can determine the outcome of the intervention even before it had been launched. Finally some important background conditions will be listed to let you see that scientific approach in the planning face will return its costs in the latter phases of the program.

Chapter 2 – Strategic communication planning – Page 16

You will receive answers for the most relevant questions about how you should plan your communication activities to support your program. We show you here that the effectiveness of your steps from a communicational angle is deeply determined by how proactive you are, and by how well you can envision the exact life-cycles of your project since strategic communication has to start earlier and finish later than the intervention itself. We also help you to create the right scope of the communication and to identify the wide range of potential tools, which vary in the different phases of the intervention.

Chapter 3 – Set of arguments and message building – Page 20

By understanding some relevant results of social psychology you will see here how to plan your arguments and messages more precisely. You will also understand how to differentiate between colour-blinded and ethnicity-conscious content depending on different circumstances. Finally we will emphasize what topics to avoid for getting the most success.

Chapter 4 – Communicators – Page 25

In this chapter we will highlight the most important aspects of finding the right speakers for the intervention. We will show you how to choose and practically prepare the lead faces of the program both from the local government and the Roma population. In addition to this you will also see why and how to find supporter communicators locally and from the national or international community.

Chapter 5 – Defining target groups – Page 28

We will emphasize here that apart from the population, which is directly affected by the intervention there are other groups of people who have to be targeted by the communication activities. You will see some possibilities how to turn the uncertain into supporters of the program in order to maximize the effectiveness of the inclusion project.

Chapter 6 – Challenges and addressing them – Page 33

You will receive here some hands-on techniques about how to prepare for the difficulties of a Roma inclusion project. We will help you to understand the relevance of the different new platforms and prepare you to a potential crisis-communication situation.

Case study sites



Overview on analyzed local projects

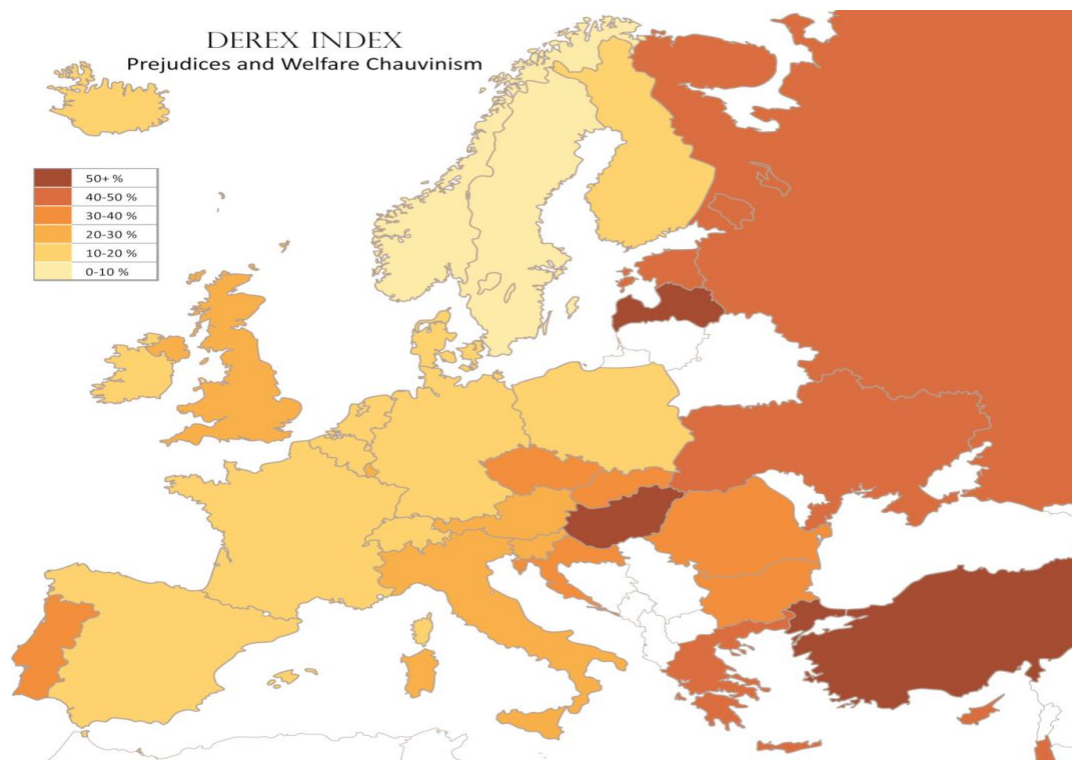
	inhabitants	~% of Roma population	the project	year	status
Kavarna, BG	15.000	15%<	infrastructural development and rehabilitation of the segregated neighborhood; development of educational institutions, legal status for all houses	2004-2011	successful and seems to be irreversible
Kyustendil, BG	42.000	~24%	school desegregation project	2009-	ongoing with success
national, RO	19.000.000	~10%	affirmative actions in tertiary education	1995-	facing obstacles also in informing the target group and tackling the issue of whether this action is discriminatory towards non-Roma
Grădinari, RO	2680	30%<	a. social economy project (locally produced vegetables); b. education and health projects, mentorship and training for local youth and women, second-chance school c. legalization of houses (property titles)	2011-	ongoing projects with significant results, strong local and national/international support
Martin, SK	56000	<3%	a. school desegregation (2002) b. kindergarten program (2005) c. community center in Bambusky (the largest Roma settlement in the city) (2014)	2002-	successfully stabilized project ongoing project also with prospect of desegregation of homogenous-Roma groups newly started project
Valkovna, SK	360	50%<	housing and infrastructure-project	2001	project leading to obstruction from the side of the local councillors, resulting in a reduced project, positive public recognition but failure on the next election
Nyíregyháza, HU	120000	~6%	school desegregation and rehabilitation of the Romani settlement (2000-2500 inhabitants)	2007-2011	a. closing the segregated school with failures b. reopening the same school -- resulting in anti-discrimination lawsuit and court decision of closing it again
Hódmezővásárhely, HU	46000	~5%	school desegregation program	2007	success with some recent symptoms of re-segregation

0. Similarities and differences in the environment of Central and Eastern European inclusion projects

Universal scenarios for successful communication cannot be defined in advance, even if there are certain general techniques that can improve the chances of success. The reception of every Roma project depends on different environmental factors, making it even more difficult to determine a general scenario. In order to situate our project and the challenges facing it in a wider context, we will present the main changes and challenges in the environment of Roma projects.

First off, let's examine the **similarities**

0.1.1. In the wake of the financial and economic crisis, welfare chauvinism and a shift towards radicalism have gained ground.³



0.1.2. „Beginning sometime around the end of 2005, in many countries of Europe, there began a rather rapid shift in political discourse regarding Roma. Changes in the standards of the acceptable—a far clearer articulation of racist and exclusionist ideas than was considered permissible at the turn of this century—have gone hand in hand with significant changes in the official treatment meted out to this, the largest, European minority. There has been a measurable increase in inter-ethnic violence and hate crimes against the Roma in a number of countries, a raft of new policies and initiatives have been introduced that more or less explicitly target this ethnic minority and a deteriorating language of public discourse on Roma across the

³ Political Capital, based on European Social Survey results, 2010

continent has become part of a disturbing reformulation of populist politics in a number of countries” -- Michael Stewart, one of the most well-known scholars on Roma issues states⁴ (Stewart, 2012). Most of the symptoms of this turn can be seen in the four countries. In *Hungary* „local politicians have largely been responsible for introducing aggressive racist terms into public discourse, finding that the local political sphere was a fertile ground for hate speech targeted at Roma communities”. (Zolnay, 2012)⁵

- 0.1.3.** New technology (Web 2.0) provides a platform for organised and also for spontaneous anti-Roma diatribes. It prevents the impact of the stigmatisation of racists, which requires their isolation.
- 0.1.4.** Anti-Roma rhetoric has been adopted by the far right across all of Central and Eastern Europe as a core element of its politics. It has thus emerged as an organised and independent communication actor that can affect the reception of Roma projects both on the local and national scale. These organisations have also managed to secure positions in local decision-making, and therefore have a say in the preparation phase.
- 0.1.5.** A similarity is that all four countries have ratified commitments and documents supporting Roma inclusion that share common approaches and frameworks (Decade of Roma Inclusion, EU framework strategy). These could serve as points of reference for supporting local initiatives. External government support is provided to local inclusion programs based on a special logic: it is very difficult to implement local inclusion projects without a general supportive climate (which hinges on the support of the strongest public policy communicator, i.e. the government, or at least its non-hostile stance), nevertheless support from the government or national media does not automatically generate local support. The research shows that national public discourse and the media were far more supportive of Roma inclusion in Hungary compared to individual attitudes. This was followed by the open voicing of prejudice and an apparent and ongoing rise of anti-Roma political forces.⁶ At the same time, it is apparent that the European Union, as the creator of a climate promoting inclusion, plays such an important role in the matter that even euro-critical governments have been forced to adopt a dual language for domestic communication (and most importantly, were forced to ratify common positions). These are all important facts in terms of communication: local decision-makers have no choice but to fulfil these

⁴ Michael Stewart (2012): New Forms of Anti-Gypsy Politics: a Challenge for Europe. in (Ed. by) Michael Stewart.: *The Gypsy 'Menace': Populism and the New Anti-Gypsy Politics*. London: Hurst.

⁵ Zolnay János (2012): Abusive Language and Discriminatory Measures in Hungarian Legal Policy. In: in (Ed. by) Michael Stewart.: *The Gypsy 'Menace': Populism and the New Anti-Gypsy Politics*. London: Hurst.

⁶ Even a strong governmental or media support has limited effects: in the late 90's, some studies predicted a potential boomerang-effect (Csepeli, Fábíán, and Sik 2006), i.e. a future increase in overtly expressing prejudiced views as an answer to the fair mass communication language, which seemed too partisan in favor of minorities from a prejudiced viewpoint. These studies also highlighted the tension between the positive discriminative efforts of the governments and the segregative readiness of the majority population and envisaged a deterioration in the relationship between the majority population and minorities. Csepeli György–Fábíán Zoltán–Sik Endre: Xenofóbia és a cigányságról alkotott vélemények (Xenophobia and Opinions about the Roma)

<http://www.tarki.hu/adatbank-h/kutjel/pdf/a881.pdf>

commitments – or at least to pretend doing so. These obligations can provide an argumentative basis for NGO's, for local decision-makers. Also for those, who are devoted supporters of Roma inclusion, but also for those, who are reluctant, and – in fear of majority opposition -- it seems easier to present these projects as expected by the EU, or other international bodies. On the other side, however even in a generally supportive climate, raw arguments can arise in regard to local projects, alongside criticism of “rebellious against incompetent bureaucrats seated at their desks”. We know examples of housing project-failures from all over the region, when Roma communities found themselves in a situation of huge resistance, generally led by the local mayor, like in the case of *Letanovsky mlyn, Slovakia*.⁷ *This resistance can often go against substantial financial interests or the law.* In other cases, like in *Burgas, Bulgaria*, the objection of the project by the local mainstream population led to the withdrawal of a huge desegregation project (and money).⁸ We have several cases of resistance (like in *Kaposvár, Hungary*) or reluctance to desegregate schools even if it is ordered by a court, like in *Sarisske Michalany, Slovakia* where a court decision on segregated education led to a wide opposition, showing up all the well known turns in these cases. (These cases follow the very same argumentative strategies on segregation in favour of Roma, the dogma of different approach, missing basic hygiene habits and non-comprehension of the majority language they would not had a chance to succeed in the mixed class.)

0.2. differences between countries and structures

We can identify substantial differences in the operation of the state and the municipal sector in the various countries, depending on which of them oversees the major service sectors. While some countries have state-run school systems and municipalities only have a say in local development plans, other countries have mostly municipality-run schools and substantial municipal competence in housing matters as well. In countries where the government wields the most competence, cooperation with state bodies is essential, and responsibility can also be expanded.

0.3. aspects for evaluating **local differences** and idiosyncrasies

0.3.1. The size of municipalities influences the planned communication. Despite being a platitude, the fact that informal communication is often more important in small municipalities is often overlooked; sometimes the key communication authorities are different. In smaller communities, the opinions of more formal authorities such as paediatricians may carry greater influence, or of other less formal figures such as former school principals. Mid-sized towns and larger cities often have their local municipal media with varying scopes of authority, and commercial media may play an important role in regional centres and large cities.

The local proportion of the Roma community certainly influences projects and communication planning. This holds true from several perspectives: if the Roma represent more than half of the population, they represent such a force that their needs and intentions are difficult to refuse, provided that they form an organised community. Conversely, if they only account for a small proportion, a Roma inclusion

⁷ <http://romovia.sme.sk/c/6879892/stredoveka-osada-letanovsky-mlyn-strasi-dalej.html>

⁸ <http://www.slivenpress.bg/ОБЩЕСТВО/1007-БУРГАС-СКОЧИ-СРЕЩУ-ЖИЛИЩА-ЗА-РОМИТЕ-С-ЕВРОПАРИ;>
<http://www.slivenpress.bg/ОБЩЕСТВО/1007-БУРГАС-СКОЧИ-СРЕЩУ-ЖИЛИЩА-ЗА-РОМИТЕ-С-ЕВРОПАРИ>

program may not be seen as an event influencing the municipality's life (for example in single-school municipalities where there are no parallel classes in schools, Roma and non-Roma pupils are not segregated within the school. This facilitates meetings between the groups and enables housing desegregation programs.) Other scholars⁹ estimate the first "panic-reactions" around 20%, when the number of conflicts and also the tendency of leaving the settlement among the majority population can lead to irreversible dynamics. Another threshold can be around 30% in schools: a research project on inclusive educational program found significant positive results in classes with less than 30% of disadvantaged students.¹⁰ At the same time, this matter is strongly shaped by earlier public agreements: oftentimes it is not the proportions, but overcoming the first taboos that is a source of frustration for the majority. (The first Roma house in the village, for instance.)

0.3.2. In the Slovakian city of Martin, the inclusion of Roma pupils was met with resistance despite the Roma population not even reaching half the national average. The case study also revealed that fears of becoming outnumbered can thwart even the best interventions: „some Members of the Municipal Council were also very concerned that the high quality and popularity of the Community Centre might attract relatives of local Roma people, so they would all start moving to Martin.” In the other Slovakian municipality of Valkovna, fears arose that the houses built for the Roma would attract much poorer Roma from Eastern Slovakia. From this perspective, it is impossible to create good inclusion programs.

This creates different forms of panic and renders success the most elusive in municipalities where the fear of “sooner or later ending up outnumbered” has spread among the non-Roma population. School programs are more difficult in these municipalities precisely because the majority population first comes face-to-face with the fact that they might become the minority in the context of schools, due to diverging age pyramids. This is the case in Romania's Grădinari, where the proportion of school-aged Roma children exceeds half, compared to just one-third within the total population. Non-Roma parents have long been sending their children to a different school on a nearby municipality. White flight has taken on such proportions that there were no obstacles from the non-Roma population regarding the decision to implement educational activities for the benefit of the Roma children. (An important question is whether this school will ever be attractive enough to be an attractive perspective for non-Roma children).

0.3.3. A clear influencing factor is the level of commitment of **local governments and their political composition**. A supportive climate and stable local majority are clearly more conducive to successful Roma inclusion projects compared to hesitant decision-makers or during acute political battles, with the opposition seizing every opportunity to weaken the local leadership, and once they secure positions on

⁹ See Gabor Havas: Kistelepülések és romák.

http://www.sulinet.hu/oroksegtar/data/magyarorszag/nemzetisegek/romak/a_ciganyok_magyarorszagon/pa- ges/008_A_kistelepulesek_es_a_romak.htm

¹⁰ Gábor Kézdi – Éva Surányi (2009): A Successful School Integration Program. An Evaluation of the Hungarian National Government's School Integration Program.

http://www.romaeducationfund.hu/sites/default/files/publications/a_succesful_school_integration_kezdi_sur anyi.pdf

decision-making bodies, they have early access to all preparation materials. An example of the former, presented in the Nyíregyháza (Hungary) case study, is despite apparent support for the school desegregation process on paper, every local representative, regardless of political affiliation, strove to spare their constituency's school from the Roma pupils.

0.3.4. The differences often lie in the **situation of the local Roma community**. Historical reasons can also determine the situation (including cohabitation traditions, the quickly collapsing sectors of the planned economy in former communist countries, which caused the emergence of total hopelessness after relative stability); while in other areas decades of smooth cohabitation and the Roma community's relative financial stability.

0.3.5. Linked to the above the **local community attitudes** can also vary greatly.

0.3.6. At the same time, it is apparent that “inclusion project” is an umbrella term that may refer to interventions of varying scope associated with **different interactions** between Roma and non-Roma citizens. We know that avoidance is one form of expression of prejudice, and one of the main challenges facing inclusion projects. We also know that individuals tend to be firm in their perception of social distance, as measured by the Bogardus social distance scale used in social psychology to measure distance between diverse groups. To put the results simply, the majority will more openly accept a Roma neighbour for their child in school or at their workplace rather than in their direct vicinity at home, and in particular within their family. In addition, project ambitions also present different dimensions, with greater pressure involved in slum settlement clearance projects compared to settlement development projects, or school desegregation projects compared to travel and school closure projects.

The logical consequence that can be drawn from these is that the success of a program primarily hinges on a thorough familiarity with local circumstances, planning adapted to them and the adequate moulding of general strategic communication rules.

1. The starting points

1.1. A well-founded inclusion program

Although a set of communication proposals does not primarily aim to define a good inclusion program, it is nevertheless important to emphasise that there are certain easily “marketable” programs, while others are less so (or to be more precise, some that would seem to be predestined for communication failure early on in the planning phase). Among the latter there are typically programs that fail to address the actual issues facing the target group, and only serve as a platform for the articulation of dissatisfaction. Likewise, programs with restricted scope also attract more opponents than supporters, especially if the selection criteria for the lucky few, who are admitted, are not clear. There should be no pressure to implement projects as large as the Bulgarian Kavarna project presented in the case study, where an integrated strategy for local development of the whole municipality was implemented over the course of a decade. The project transformed the small town radically, and resulted in the improvement of the living conditions of the whole local community – among them the living conditions on the slum settlement and those who were integrated during the project.. If we launch a cultural program aimed at only a few families on a slum settlement with hundreds of inhabitants and poor infrastructure, it should not be dubbed as inclusion and has little chances of being popular. An inclusion program is worthy of the name if it yields benefits for at least a big part of the community -- at least in an indirect manner.

Just like the emergence of other potential local crises, the timing of measures is essential, not only from a communication or political perspective (for instance the timing of project launches prior to elections), but also in terms of event dynamics. In Martin, Slovakia, the children of the dynamically expanding slum settlement were distributed among the municipality’s different schools before segregation had become institutionalised and a prevailing phenomenon. Once it does, teacher bodies also undergo rapid change, some parents will insist on Roma-free schools, while some Roma parents will also favour segregated schools providing lower-standard education but greater safety. In general terms obviously the sooner the better, however it has to be nailed down that even if we are in a delay and the segregation has already institutionalised in the local education system it is still worth to start to introduce an inclusion program. The price, which might be paid later because of not taking any steps, could be very high.

1.2. Decision preparation dilemmas

Preparing decisions during the planning phase and planning their communication cannot be clearly distinguished. Errors in decision preparation also represent a communication risk. However there are some aspects that should be handled as a priority in terms of communication.

1.2.1. Opportunity or unavoidable process?

It should be considered as a fundamental question early on during decision preparation whether the program will be presented by the head of the local government to the municipality as an opportunity open to consultation, in an effort to reach consensus among the parties harbouring varied and possibly opposing views, or conversely, as an inevitable step not open to debate in terms of its existence and planning.

The case studies revealed that several inclusion projects were orchestrated in the market the authoritarian manner, or a manner combining both authoritarian and paternalistic features. These decisions were not preceded by consultation with stakeholders or the population. The projects worked nevertheless, and in several case studies, the leaders emphasised that once decisions had been passed, the participants were committed to the same goal (this occurred in both Nyíregyháza and Martin). There is no question that these measures often call for bravery and commitment. At the same time, such orchestration yields less stable projects, despite short-term success, as they are often maintained based on the leader's commitment and authority, both of which may change. The Hódmezővásárhely (Hungary) educational inclusion program was inspired by the logic applied in Martin, and the mayor in charge of its implementation is today Hungary's minister of the Prime Minister's Office. At the same time the government received sharp critics both locally and internationally regarding its weak performance on educational inclusion. The political balance can change any time within a local government.

At the same time, the research findings in the context of the desegregation that took place the United States support the method of enforcement (Aronson (2008)). The study presents the role of desegregation coupled with the sentiment of inevitability in dispelling prejudice. In other words, it is enforced, forced, aggressive. It is widely known that deeply rooted prejudice cannot be dispelled through awareness campaigns. However, if a person is aware that they must come into contact with a member of the group they are hostile to, their attitude and the irreconcilable and dissonant nature of the situation will give rise to a cognitive dissonance. Cognitive dissonance refers to an unpleasant state of tension that the individual strives to mitigate. One way is to modify former perceptions. Contrary to awareness raising campaigns, this inevitable relationship may put into play a mechanism that will motivate them to ultimately change their views. They may begin to rethink their stereotypes of the given group and even begin to seek out their positive characteristics in an effort to reduce the tension generated by their attitude and the irreconcilable situation. Moreover, positive experiences may further drive this process. This largely unconscious reduction of dissonance is likely to materialise among them not only pupils, but also parents and teachers.

This is obviously not a matter of communication first and foremost, but does call for different communication approaches. In case of an enforced decision, planning communication is just as important as in case of consensus-based program design.

1.2.2. Participant and stakeholder involvement

If a **program's direct participants did not become devoted supporters, or** at least patient or neutral toward the project, severe implementation problems and potential communication risks will occur. There are myriad sensitising and tolerance-raising trainings, of varying standard. This is why joint planning in cooperation with the implementing parties is recommended in terms of the key messages, arguments or other communication tasks. Such a task, especially if it involves members of the target group, automatically attunes and involves participants.

Inclusion and its impact

Experiments have successfully measured the positive impact of the inclusion that comes with role identification. During the war, there were efforts in the United States to persuade the population to keep and consume the giblets, rich in protein, instead of throwing them out, contrary to American culinary custom. However the meetings held for homemakers essentially failed to make any impact. Social psychologist Kurt Lewin put his own twist on the matter, and instead of continuing with trying to persuade homemakers, they asked participants following a short introduction the following question: “do you think homemakers like you can be convinced of preparing giblets?”. Those who identified with the task and collected arguments in the debate gained conviction, and 32% of participants in these groups later prepared the giblets. (See Pratkanis and Aronson: *Age of Propaganda — the Everyday Use and Abuse of Persuasion*, 1992)

Another form of attuning is to organise well structured visits enabling the implementing parties to be eyewitnesses to the success of similar projects elsewhere (precisely because fatalism regarding the failure of Roma projects strongly affects the implementing parties). They are given account of successful projects from colleagues.

When planning strategic communication, the issue warranting intervention must also be revealed to part of the interest network groups, prepare them for the impending change and include them in the planning process. During this phase, not all stakeholder groups can be involved, as the purpose of this work phase is precisely to plan the notification and inclusion of the interest network groups.

1.2.3. The dynamics of intervention

A dilemma to think about for every project, to simplify the question in terms of the two extremities, is whether to imagine the program as a path that we follow planning *step-by-step* or rather along a *single decision action*, communicating the entire program from the outset? There are arguments for and against both alternatives. In the first case, we can avoid vehement counter reactions and build upon a potential continuous attuning of the audience, while the other approach can stifle allegations of concealing the true objectives. This raises another dilemma: total transparency from the outset of planning increases the chances of organisation among opponents, while concealing objectives reduces the opportunity for it. It is difficult to find a universally feasible solution to these dilemmas, but we believe that there is no such thing as a communication battle that can be won in silence.

1.3. Background conditions

The success of program implementation hinges on myriad conditions. Many of these must be available from the start of program planning and cannot be added later on. The following section presents the main aspects fundamentally shaping project communication.

1.3.1. Risk and situation analysis

The conception of the integrative intention can stem from several sources, as are already discussed in this paper. The more internal the intention, e.g. conceived by the head or leaders of the local government, the greater the chances of successful implementation. But even in these cases, the risks of the potential program must be assessed and the situation and opinion of stakeholders evaluated. Thoroughly examining these risks and idiosyncrasies can also serve as a basis for managing communication risks.

1.3.1.1. SWOT analysis

A SWOT analysis can easily be prepared and applied in these situations, and provides a crutch for identifying the program’s strengths, weaknesses, inherent opportunities and

potential threats. By completing the table in Annex 1, the features that can be used as positive messages later on and the opportunities that can be reached based on these strengths can be identified even before program planning. The latter can be aligned with the program's vision. The program's weaknesses, deficiencies and other negative factors that can be obstacles can also be pinpointed — assuming a sufficient sense of self-criticism —, as well as the risks, attacks and limitations arising therefrom. The weeks and threats dimension can later be used to prepare for crises that can be expected to arise during implementation, thus this analysis of the program supports communication planning.

1.3.1.2. Situation analysis and stakeholder mapping

A detailed situation analysis has to be performed prior to launching an inclusion program and communication strategy, including stakeholder situation and opinion mapping in terms of the matter at hand. Stakeholder analysis should include not only primary stakeholders, but also other groups within the interest network.

Potential stakeholders in different inclusion programs

Housing projects	Educational inclusion
Families who get a new accommodation	Teachers (in both the segregated in the receiving schools), headmasters
Neighbours of the integrated families	School pupils and parents (also in both schools)
Families in similar situation but without having the opportunity to move to a new flat/house	Specialised staff
Political and professional decision makers	Political and professional decision makers
Members of local civil society	Members of local civil society
Public figures of the Roma community	Public figures of the Roma community
Indirectly affected members of the local community	Indirectly affected members of the local community
	Teachers' unions
Journalists	Journalists

The analysis of the interest network should determine the general attitude of these groups regarding segregation/desegregation, their relevant knowledge, homogeneity and interest representation capacity and activity. Action research within segregated schools and communities is also essential, as is an analysis of the operating rules of the receiving schools. The situation analysis should also evaluate the primary target groups of desegregation.

There are also examples of projects that get off to a bumpy start but are concluded successfully if stakeholders are listened to.

In Bulgaria's Kyustendil, in 2012 the mayor announced at a press conference that the primary school and the kindergarten in the Roma neighbourhood "Iztok" will be moved elsewhere in the city. The mayor exports data according to which the attendance rate in the primary school of "Iztok" neighbourhood varies between 14% and 30%. Roma people and NGO's, on the other side, met negatively the idea of relocating the school and the kindergarten out of the Roma neighbourhood, and have therefore collected over 800 signatures against it. "Despite being out of the city, his aim was to leave them segregated," says a representative of a local Roma NGO. But gradually, with the help of external experts - facilitators sent by Open Society Institute-Sofia to overcome the conflict, the mayor gave up talking about his vision for moving the Roma school in a building outside the neighbourhood. Instead, a participative planning of municipal inclusion strategy was started with the involvement of Roma leaders, local NGOs and many grassroots Roma. Meantime the joint project of the municipality with the local Roma NGO is actively conducted for school desegregation.

1.3.2. Measurements

Claims can be made freely in the absence of facts, therefore independent measurements are backing results and they can be used as a key element in inclusion programs. In Nyíregyháza (Hungary), where the Roma school was closed six years ago and just recently reopened, everyone is citing earlier results or failures, depending on where they stand in the debate. The case study on secondary and higher education affirmative action in Romania draws the same conclusion: „Communication on affirmative measures needs to be based on thorough monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of policies. When institutions are unable to provide data on the impact of the policy, the legitimacy of the policy measures will decrease dramatically. The fact that there are misunderstandings regarding the affirmative measures for the Roma is partly due to the lack of monitoring and evaluation of the measures by the implementers themselves.”

It is no coincidence that successful anti-poverty schemes such as the Progres/Oportunidades in Mexico or the Bolsa Familia in Brazil have set aside substantial funding for independent external assessment from the very beginning.

Independent external measurement does not necessarily have to be costly and can for instance be implemented with the involvement of nearby universities, asked to conduct field studies. Another option is to define well thought-out indicators, for example to measure an increase in medical visits or social service use by integrated families in the wake of slum settlement clearances. In addition to this the mentioned measurements are not exclusively capable to measure the situation of the Roma population, but they can also be applied to clarify other relevant topics. For example in the city of Hódmezővásárhely (Hungary) the quality of the education system had been measured in details. (And it turned out that it needed to be improved.) Moreover during the process of the inclusion professional performance indicator tests – so objective angles – had been used for ranking the teachers in order to reduce their amount on the right way in the affected schools. These measurements all supported the decision makers to take the most appropriate actions.

1.3.3. Preliminary assessment of needs and implementation risks

Another type of necessary assessment can mitigate subsequent implementation risks. A difficult dynamic of local inclusion programs is that the more efficient they are, the higher the amount of legitimate claims or simply jealousy within the population, which cannot be satisfied.¹¹ This holds especially true if the privileges go to individuals broadly afflicted by prejudiced beliefs of not having to work for these benefits.

All programs involving significant assistance measures sooner or later engender left-out individuals who feel that they also deserve the service. And oftentimes, they are right.

When the slum settlement's school was shut down in Nyíregyháza (Hungary), a school bus was launched to transport the institution's pupils to their new school. Soon after, the parents of children living on the outskirts of town also demanded the bus service. To avoid allegations of bias or simply to prevent the jealousy of those left out from hampering the project, a thorough, comprehensive risk analysis and assessment of needs must be carried out when planning such assistance (to determine who will also demand assistance). In some cases this can also lead to the reframing of the intervention and its target group: for instance the shift from ethnic targeting to socio-economic indicators.

¹¹ In a lot of cases these represent a social pressure countering the ascending social mobility of a subordinated group. In other cases these can represent real tensions, real needs and unsolved problems.

2. Strategic communication planning

2.1. Proactive communication

Decision-makers of an inclusion project are in a better position from the outset to begin with: they usually have more resources than potential critics, are better organised and are familiar with plans. This situational advantage can be forged into a communication advantage through proactive communication. Alongside thorough preparation, persuading the planned supporting speakers and communication steps planned in advance are the keys to success. Half-hearted causes and a “maybe they won’t notice” mentality are destined to fail. Proactive communication can also quiet detractors’ voices over time: In Valkovna (Slovakia) the mayor also talked to the *media* on several occasions. She noted that they did their best to inform about the case in an objective manner. The NGO representative argued that the fact that initially opposing councillors were annoyed by the interest of the media contributed to their eventual back off.”

2.2. Communication and project life cycles

2.2.1. The project and its communication

When a project’s life cycle and its major milestones are represented on a timeline, the following processes and specific points emerge:

1. The program’s necessity
 - a. Milestone: the intention for integrative action is conceived within local government leadership
2. Program preparation
 - a. Milestone: the decision on the project is passed
3. Program launch and execution
 - a. Milestones: key action
 - b. Milestone: program conclusion
4. Follow-up
 - a. Milestone: results

Project communication does not always and necessarily coincide with the project itself or its implementation. If there may of course be substantial differences between individual cases, but broadly speaking, communication must begin before or simultaneously to program preparation and is only finished after showcasing the outcomes and clarifying questions. Its objectives, intensity, nature, target groups and toolset may be constantly changing, the communication activity or the opportunity for communication must be permanent and continuous.

2.2.1.1. The program’s necessity

The need for a Roma inclusion program may arise within local government in a multitude of manners and under diverse circumstances. Instead of trying to define each of them, it should be emphasised that communication steps can also accompany this process. Gleaning individuals’ opinions in an organised or possibly informal manner, posting votes on the local

government website can yield results that can trigger or reinforce forming inclusion efforts among municipal leaders.

A non-exhaustive list of tools:

- An opinion poll of the population on housing and education matters (if the results are rather negative there is a clear need for detailed preparation especially in order to create a more open attitude in the different parties)
- Measuring the preferences of a narrower community, possibly in concealed form (e.g. assessing parent opinions or school related matters using surveys or other methods)

2.2.1.2. Program preparation

During program preparation, the primary objective is to gain potential supporters and to attune stakeholders. In this context, arguments and information should be conveyed in a focused manner to the various target groups.

It's worth to take into consideration all of the potential communication tools in order to achieve the best possible outcome (the list below is always possible to extend according to local specialities):

- Online and offline information pamphlets
- Involvement of local media
- Conferences and workshops. (These tools mainly enhance professional support and are less relevant in small municipalities, although this depends on the budget.)
- Town hall meetings, public forums, roundtable discussions Organised occasions attended by the entire community or the affected portion thereof, who are given a platform for a Q&A session and for sharing their dilemmas.
- Consultation days: opportunity for stakeholders to voice their opinions in an organised setting, or a more intimate one as necessary.
- Parent-teacher meetings
- Family visits

2.2.1.3. Communicating decisions

The conception of the decision on the program itself deserves a separate mention: the transparent communication of this decision serves the unconditional notification of direct stakeholders and the optional notification of public opinion.

The range of available tools is varied and extensive here, too:

- Press announcements
- Comprehensive mobilisation of local media outlets
- Organised interviews in the regional or national press
- Paid forms: advertising, flyers, Direct Marketing letters
- Online platforms
- Public disclosure of representative body sessions where the program is discussed and decided on.
- Streaming of specific sessions in case of larger municipalities with local media.

2.2.1.4. The implementation process

The objective of communication in the context of implementation is to continuously handle incoming enquiries and issues on the one hand, and clearly document and showcase

individual milestones on the other. These tools include those listed above, alongside solutions supporting personal information transfer which have seen their value rise:

- For instance door-to-door outreach, most consciously applied in Kyustendil among the municipalities featured in the case studies. Sasho Krastev, Chairman of the neighborhood Community center says: "We decided to conduct individual interviews with parents of children on a "door to door site", because our people no longer believe when general meetings are being organized. They expect that they will be used for political purposes. This is why we approach every family personally or invite them individually in the Community Center, where we talk with them and prepare them to involve with the project ..." This is the same group with negative past experiences (due to the biased media coverage of the confrontation with the mayor and the opposing collection of signatures, they shied away from informing the general public at the beginning of the project).
- Setting up information points with paid staff members of the municipality. They can be employed either for the particular project or mover long term to help the Roma community. It crucial that at least some of them have to be Roma. (for instance in Kavarna (Bulgaria), there were a separate three-member team, which was mobilised to provide continuous information to the Roma community, working on-site at an information point set up locally, and who thus essentially lived together with the program's stakeholders. Program planning was also handled by working groups broadly including social partners.)

2.2.1.5. Follow-up

In the context of follow-up, the showcasing of positive outcomes for the public at large should be the focus of communication. In terms of the available tools, apart from the tools listed above event-based communication can be introduced as well, just like concerts, or street parties. For more on follow-up, see Section 2.5.

2.3. The scope of communication: only towards those involved, or “bringing out the big guns”?

A great dilemma when planning local inclusion programs is the scope of communication needed to manage them. Many think that by gaining local support, all serious conflict can be avoided, while national communication — over which local decision-makers have even less influence — may be detrimental. From a different approach, however, it is apparent that the situation has greatly changed over the past roughly one decade: at least in Hungary, the reach of the political movement vehemently and publicly opposed to any public policy action to protect the Roma — or the poor, if they include Roma — has extended to the level of local politics, and it immediately sheds national light on such cases. It is therefore more efficient to prepare for the national implications of communication from the outset, and even if the project owner does not expand the scope of proactive communication for some reason, preparation allows access to national media in the event of an attack or crisis.

2.4. Institutionalisation

These projects call for the harmonised institution of different communication tasks. Such harmonisation hinges upon consultation and institutionalised execution. This not only means appointing key communication leaders, discussed later in this paper, but also the operation of different communication infrastructures. In Kavarna, (Bulgaria) an information point was

set up to continuously provide information to the Roma community and answer their questions. In Martin (Slovakia) besides the appointment of a full-time social worker and two assistants working with the 3 segregated Roma settlements of the town, the Municipal Office representatives, including the Deputy Mayor, the non-profit organisation called Matra (established by the city to maintain the housing stock it owns), social workers from this project and Roma representatives from the three communities meet every Monday to discuss the relevant issues. (However, here the community was not included in decision preparation.) A key protagonist in the Valkovna (Slovakia) case also endorses the institutionalisation of consultations: „in cases (...) where there is a dispute between two divided communities to establish a committee composed of Roma, non-Roma and NGO representatives and local and regional representatives.”

2.5. Follow-up

Passing a decision and creating a new status quo is by no means synonymous with victory. Oftentimes emotions and criticism are just bottled up and boil below the surface, ready to be set off by a spark — a school fight or a row between neighbours, interpreted as an ethnic conflict. This is not to say that we cannot rest until we have converted the staunchest opponents of the program, but we can assert that during the execution phase and oftentimes even after, we must continuously provide a platform for resolving arising issues in a structured framework, for regular information, parent forums, teacher and professional dialogue and meetings between the broad group of stakeholders in the inclusion program. One of the strongest counterarguments against those who discredit successful programs is to demonstrate the level of organisation and unity among program supporters.

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2.5.1. Positive reinforcement and symbolic recognition of programs

A thoroughly planned and executed inclusion program is bound to attract wide-ranging attention. Decision-makers and international organisations are avidly searching for exemplary programs that can serve as a model for others, with a whole infrastructure that has emerged for them, including the Mayors Making the Most of EU Funds for Roma Inclusion Network (MERI) over the past years. The dissemination of best practices serves an important dynamic: the more successful model programs there are underway, the less fatalism there is regarding these projects, which may help overcome the challenges of launching new programs. Therefore any recognition is important from the outset for local inclusion programs. (However, naming an intervention as „best practice” should be done very carefully after a thorough, in-depth field assessment of the intervention, since showcasing failed or semi-failed projects as „best practice” is counterproductive, as it feeds the idea that important amounts of funding go towards Roma communities, without visible impact, therefore the Roma themselves must be guilty for not „progressing”.) This calls for the continuous monitoring of programs, performing the previously specified measurements and maintaining ties with partners and international professional bodies. The opportunities for professional cooperation should be identified from the programs outset, creating a separate position for this function. Tying in programs to larger networks also enables follow-up. Of course, international or other professional recognition does not automatically generate local support: although the mayor of Valkovna (Slovakia) received a positive public recognition for her housing project (a prize was awarded to her), she got not re-elected in the next municipal elections (2006). Almost the same happened to the mayor of Kavarna (Bulgaria), who received recognition by different EU institutions, however it nearly cost him

his post since he lost a substantial part of the voters by the majority at last elections. On the other hand, we also have examples of re-election after an ambitious Roma program: see Hódmezővásárhely (Hungary) in 2010.

3. Set of arguments and message building

3.1. General comments

Roma inclusion projects often make the mistake of basing their communication on dogma that is nowhere near self-evident or widely subscribed to. It is often stated nowadays that the former, human rights-driven discourse that regulated minority-related debates in the past has failed. It is a general phenomenon across Europe that political correctness is often identified in the simplified manner as a repressive, taboo-forming discourse, and as such, much criticised. This enables extreme movements to assume the position of “representing unspoken, repressed opinions nonetheless held by the majority of the population”. Moreover, the far right has expropriated several categories of this discourse both in Hungary and across Europe.¹²

Examples of such dogma permeating human rights based argumentation include:

1. Being racist is something to be ashamed of;
2. We must show solidarity towards those in need;
3. The state has an obligation to help the poor
4. Presenting the Roma as victims can give rise to broad-ranging solidarity.

However, public opinion does not support these notions nearly as much as one would think, albeit to different degrees. Moreover, the set of arguments itself could become counter-productive. In spite of this, many still base their set of arguments on these dogmas.

This is not to say that we disagree with these fundamental principles, but if we are right, they operate inefficiently and substitute arguments should be found to support Roma projects.

One such substitute argument is to demonstrate the illogical contradictions of racism instead of automatically stigmatising it. Positive examples could also work, for instance by incorporating the historically accepting and solidarity behaviour of the local majority community into communication. Communicating solidarity towards the poor and the interests recognised interest in state support could also be effective: we are all familiar with situations where failure to address an issue, such as letting a slum settlement grow and deteriorate for decades, could lead to higher costs over time.

Unilateral martyrdom is bound to fail, as society harbours strong stereotypes that Roma passively rely on help from the majority. We must be able to showcase situation where Roma can actively take part in projects in a dignified manner, emphasising this in the context of planning. If this is for instance public work within our own environment or a parents' club organised in the context of an education inclusion program, then they should be showcased. At the same time, we should keep in mind that showing positive personal

¹² See Balibar (1991): Is there a neo-racism? in: Étienne Balibar, Immanuel Wallerstein: Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities. Verso.

examples has only limited impact, as the prejudiced portion of the public will see them as the exception proving the rule, or as propaganda.¹³

Options for creating messages conveyed on various levels should be examined, for instance using the arguments of recognised interests (the amount of money received as aid), rationality (is it viable to live only on aid) and empathy. When devising argumentation, a few expected counterarguments should be examined and addressed, anticipating criticism.

“Counter-panic” as a communication framework

The decision-makers in Martin, Slovakia chose an interesting strategy for communicating the local school inclusion program: they argued that distributing Roma pupils among the schools was important in the interest of the schools, to prevent select schools from becoming Roma schools.

“We do not want to burden only one school with Roma children. It will be more logical if we quietly distribute them. It will get lost in the crowd of children and at the same time those children will have better opportunities to be pulled up by the other children than if they all were in one classroom or one school” – argued one employee of the Municipal Office. Constructing Roma students as a “burden” to be equally shared was the framing most of Municipal Council Members and principals were able to relatively smoothly endorse. Regardless of the fact, how derogative this construction of Roma students is, not the argument about the benefits of Roma inclusion but the solidarity argument about the need to share the “burden” among the schools made this motion acceptable for the majority of Municipal Council Members.” (Miškolci, 2014¹⁴)

Martin’s decision-makers had already used this method in the past, when they had justified the establishment of a community house and the related long-term financial commitment citing the need to “re-educate” the Roma population to live “in a more cultured manner” (Miškolci, *ibid.*).

Despite this preventing a more severe conflict, it remains to be seen whether communication that nonetheless contributes to reinforcing mistrust and intolerance towards the Roma community will be an impediment to support by the majority for subsequent interventions in the future.

3.2. Planning messages

Arguments can be made to support a Roma inclusion project in many forms. Some people will resonate more strongly with the arguments of solidarity and empathy, while others with the argument of an own recognised interest. These will also depend on lead communicator attitudes and traditions of cooperation with the local community. However, it is likely that various registers provide better chances of success, for instance because the more work to refute. The smallest common denominator is to:

- Have figures. (The importance of estimates and large numbers). The concept of news value is also determined by quantities for editorial staff: events affecting a selected few to a great extent, or many to a slighter extent have news value.
- Have a vision! What are the advantages and benefits of the change?
- Have reference stories (successful models implemented elsewhere, life stories)
- Have transparent costs, comparisons and resource allocation from the outset

¹³ Just how difficult it is to change stereotypes and prejudices against minorities is amply illustrated by a study on the effects of the Bill Cosby Show extraordinarily popular among the white public. In contrast with stereotypes held about blacks, the main characters of this serial were members of a successful professional black family. However, according to the research, prejudices against blacks were not diminished despite the fact that each episode of the serial was watched by millions. Many solved the contradiction between the sympathetic black family and the stereotypes of the black with the following line of reasoning: there you are, you can see that the blacks can only blame themselves: if they were willing to work, they would be just as successful as the Huxtables.’ (Jhally and Lewis. 1992: *Enlightened Racism: The Cosby Show, Audiences & the Myth of the American Dream*)

¹⁴ Jozef Miškolci: Social Inclusion of Roma Students in Martin (Slovak Republic)

Messages are obviously determined by the specific inclusion project at hand, nevertheless key dilemmas can universally be identified. These include:

3.2.1. ethnicity-conscious vs colour-blind communication messages

Overview on analyzed local projects from the perspective of communication

	the project	main characteristics of communication
Kavarna, BG	infrastructural development and rehabilitation of the segregated neighbourhood; development of educational institutions, legal status for all houses	“color-blind”; involve in the communication/public consultation the entire local community; common goals
Kyustendil, BG	school desegregation project	low-level intensity of public communication, high involvement of the community, ethnic-conscious
national, RO	affirmative actions in tertiary education	ethnic-conscious, low-level involvement of the community
Grădinari, RO	a. social economy project (locally produced vegetables); b. education and health projects, mentorship and training for local youth and women, second-chance school c. legalization of houses (property titles)	a. color-blind; b-c.ethnic-conscious high involvement of the community; tackling prejudices with cooperation; high intensity in network building
Martin, SK	a. school desegregation (2002) b. kindergarten program (2005) c. community center in Bambusky (the largest Roma settlement in the city) (2014)	a-c.ethnic-conscious, with even some derogative elements toward Roma; communication among decision makers and teachers; low intensity in public media, low level involvement of Roma,
Valkovna, SK	housing and infrastructure-project	ethnic-conscious, with multiple argumentation (human rights, legal, economic, etc). No strategic planning, intensive communication-battle with the involvement of high ranking figures
Nyíregyháza, HU	school desegregation and rehabilitation of the Romani settlement (2000-2500 inhabitants)	argumentation: a. lawfulness, available savings and EU funds, low intensity of communication b. ethnic-based, huge coverage, with the involvement of high ranking politicians
Hódmező-vásárhely, HU	school desegregation program	intervention framed not by human rights rhetoric but by the improvement of the standards of education; high intensity of communication; permanent platforms of decision making and feedback

The question arose in respect of several programs examined whether Roma programs necessarily need to be communicated as such. For one, regions are rife with strong anti-Roma prejudice, and notions of their “excessive use of support” are usually a main tenet of this prejudice. In addition, the beneficiaries of these programs are generally entitled to benefits not on the grounds of ethnicity, but of poverty, geographic location or simply as citizens. There is another argument to avoid ethnocentric communication: these programs also deserve support based on other, non-Roma related arguments. Maintaining segregated Roma schools is generally costly: In Hungary, these are typically small squalls, and in addition it is difficult to recruit large numbers of good teachers for them in the long run. In Hódmezővásárhely (Hungary), the entire school system was overhauled on the basis of institutional downsizing, and the Roma school closed down in this context.

On the other hand, majority parents or individuals ending up with Roma neighbours in the context of inclusion projects are not ***afraid in general***, but anti-Roma stereotypes mobilise into fears within them. This group will always regard the affected group as Roma, no matter what. Moreover, counter-forces that collective votes and build influence have

appeared everywhere within the region and created their own communication platforms. They are the ones that will attack inclusion programs based on anti-Roma sentiment from the very start, and their strategy will be to lend an ethnic perspective to the program. It is not impossible to insist on an argumentation that continuously and firmly declares that beneficiary Roma children/families, etc. are not given assistance based on ethnic grounds, but because they are poor and marginalised, and all issues faced by local citizens are equally addressed. (Also adding that the local Roma community is generally not simply and homogeneously poor, but is a dynamic heterogeneous group with its internal stratification, with a substantial share of middle class people who do not need to be treated as poor, marginalized people.)

In Kavarna (Bulgaria), opponents to the housing project were quick to organise. However, from the outset the program was packaged in a **vision** that projected better living conditions for both the Roma and non-Roma population of the small town. Thus the program's beneficiaries gained eligibility based on their role as local inhabitants, rather than on ethnic grounds. The Kavarna case study reveals that "in the municipal development plan no specific data indicating the status of the Roma, but there are data on the state of infrastructure and housing in the various districts and villages of the municipality", and the Roma were not beneficiaries "because 'Roma are privileged and entitled to special rights' (...) but because the municipality has an obligation to respect the human rights of every citizen to a decent life, work, education, health and available social services." Showcasing how Roma programs are aligned with majority interests and the entire municipality's interests (mainstreaming) is essential for successful communication.

Most often, such elements can be identified. This is most conspicuous in case of housing programs coupled with infrastructure development, which generally benefits the entire municipality. This is why the decision-makers of the Valkovna (Slovakia) project presented the following arguments: the construction of the dwelling together with the technical infrastructure would increase the quality of housing of all residents. (In addition to the arguments on the consequences of marginalizing the community: bad socio-economic situation, no capacity to resolve the housing situation on their own, high unemployment and low income, no access to the relevant infrastructure, etc.) and examples on good practices from other parts of Slovakia. The case of Grădinari (Romania) teaches us that „one of the most important strategies to obtain support for the interventions at local level is to articulate interventions which, because they aim at solving a commonly perceived problem, can profit both ethnic groups and thus co-interest the non-Roma. For instance, the social economy initiatives are intended first and foremost to profit the Roma community, but the non-Roma are not excluded from the intervention.”

3.2.2. Topics to avoid/refute

In the course of preparation, the topics and settings to avoid also require serious thought. Refutations must be devised for them with the same degree of detail. These topics and settings can be varied, so there is no universal recipe for describing them. However, due preparations must certainly be made for the following:

- Messages undermining the credibility of lead communicators ("they are only in it for the money, they are hypocrites", etc.);
- The theme of "undeserved support for the Roma" can also emerge with regard to Roma inclusion projects;

-- The different forms of panic generation cannot be avoided (“they will fill up other children's classrooms with misbehaving Roma children”);

Educational inclusion: can it weight down majority student?

Many majority parents share the view that integrating Roma pupils among majority pupils hampers their educational progress. A thorough assessment of the results of an educational inclusion program in Hungary confirmed that the reading skills of Roma pupils developed at a faster rate in the context of integrated schooling coupled with adequate support from teachers, and that inclusion had no negative impact on the progress of non-Roma pupils. In addition, the modern teaching methods used improved pupils' self-assessment irrespective of their ethnicity and boosted the social acceptance of Roma pupils among their non-Roma peers. Therefore besides the development of cognitive skills, self-assessment and attitudes towards ethnic groups also undergo substantial improvement. The research found significant positive results in classes with less than 30% of disadvantaged children. (Gábor Kézdi — Éva Surányi (2009, *ibid*):

3.3. Attunement: stating facts and soberness

On the other side, organisations' strategic communication strategies based on the idea of getting the most success out of the least possible investment carry similar risks. Different media analyses have long pinpointed the fact that the media representation of Roma is shaped by the PR campaigns of various entities (such as the state, public offices and local governments). These usually present minor contributions as huge efforts and fail to report on the scope of the programs in terms of the community and whether actual changes can be expected. Failure to do so often generates expectations within the community that cannot be satisfied, and the discrepancy between lofty projects and unchanged poverty will be addressed by claiming that the Roma are responsible for their own situation, claiming that these organisations have already done everything they could for them.

Therefore it is essential to avoid presenting our (for instance the local governments') opportunities and efforts as anything more than they are.

Appropriation of concepts and resisting this phenomenon

One of the weapons used in communication battles is to appropriate certain key concepts, injecting them with a different meaning. This is what happened in *Sarisske Michalany*, Slovakia, where segregation is carried out “in the interest of Roma children”. This happened also in the Nyíregyháza (Hungary) case. Effective communication requires adhering to original meanings and to resist expansive or transformative definitions. This can be achieved through a greater volume of communication or the adoption of new expressions (for instance co-schooling instead of inclusion).

Another symptom of weak attuning is whether confrontational or more sophisticated communication strategies yield better results in a context of open prejudice. „The mayor of Grădinari (Romania) has numerous appearances in the media. In all his appearances, he contributes to shaping a discourse, which counters the usual prejudice towards the Roma. His strategy to combat prejudice can rather be described as a cooperative one, as opposed to a conflicting position in which the prejudice is combated frontally. Thus, when faced with prejudiced views on the Roma, he emphasises the positive examples of the Roma in Grădinari, rather than attacking the views of the journalists, who will try to reaffirm stereotypes as a general strategy of media writing. Noteworthy is the fact that there are no negative comments to the online articles detailing the interventions for the Roma in Grădinari, in an online environment where anti-Roma prejudice thrives uncensored.”

4. Communicators

4.1. Lead communicators

Opinion leader levels must be defined for every single project, despite varying inclusion projects and contexts. According to the generally accepted interpretation, these levels are:

- Decision-maker (e.g. Hódmezővásárhely)
- Civil leader, activist
- Roma community leader, activist
- External expert

In this regard, a key question is whether to appoint at least one **spokesperson, a lead communicator** with high credibility and communication authority for the project. At the same time, a **Roma spokesperson** of similar standing is needed for articulating the message towards the affected Roma community (as the media will sooner or later also find them). The credibility of the latter is also a key matter: in case of projects shifting the status quo or largely impinging on the interests of certain groups, or projects evoking fear, the media will seek out Roma figures who will contradict the program's objectives. Neutralising or persuading and supporting them could be an important task for the Roma leader or spokesperson familiar with the entire program. In addition, the **group of professionals involved in implementation** likely to meet the media must be identified and prepared. The latter two groups have special credibility in communication: one of them represents direct stakeholders, the chief beneficiaries of the project, while the professionals involved in implementation wield a special level of professional credibility, including in the eyes of political decision-makers. (There are also other important communication protagonists including the local general practitioner or priest, discussed later in this paper.)

4.1.1. The credibility of speakers

The credibility of communicators must be a key aspect during planning. There are myriad strategies for communicating an inclusion program:

- Some opt for the action to be taken in the face of pressure from external forces (legislative changes, the government, the EU);
- Others try to forge alliances with the local elite (e.g. inclusion within local government schools, but select children can continue their schooling in local elite schools);
- Others still cite rational arguments (e.g. development of local society, reinforcing the labour market).

The first two strategies are not devoid of pitfalls, especially in Eastern Europe, where a local hero can easily become a hero by going up against the central government, and this may be anticipated in such cases. Under the other scenario, there will always be some from the middle class left out from elite places, but their influence cannot be predicted. Whichever strategy decision-makers choose, the matter of credibility will always be key in terms of both the local community and stakeholders.

The strategies calling credibility into question are nearly not as varied as one might think, and are based on a few basic motives based on our experiences:

- Individual interest (does the decision-maker have any personal or other interest in the project that may cast doubt on its sincerity?)

- Are they expecting things of others that they themselves would not do? This includes opinions calling on them to “try living in this situation” instead of talking from the safety of an office, etc.
- The intention's credibility, which ties into the topic of messages

Avoiding these pitfalls should be emphasised early on during planning.

A special case among the case studies is the example of the mayor of Grădinari (Romania), which “shows that one of the key factors in succeeding to implement successfully interventions for the Roma is to find committed persons within the local authority. Certainly, the Grădinari case is an ideal one, in which the top position is occupied by a person committed to intervene for the benefit of the Roma (and he is also a Roma). However, it needs to be emphasised that many of the current projects and successes are the result of long years of networking, capacity building and acquiring experience in the local administration. The work of the mayor of Grădinari started years before his election as an NGO-leader.”

4.1.2. Preparing communicators

A project can only be successful and yield results if stakeholders are accurately, adequately and responsibly notified in the context of project preparation, execution and follow-up. Alongside stakeholders, public opinion in both the narrow and broader sense is also decisive, with project leaders, spokespersons and other participants assuming a role in public disclosure, alongside their own other functions.

When announcing, launching and implementing programs, project leaders and members may find themselves in the spotlight of regional or even national media. Many journalist or reporter questions may be directed at them, and they may not be equipped for addressing these questions. Local government actors should be prepared for handling such situations generated by the media. The bullet-point list included in Annex 2, although not exhaustive, nevertheless provides the basics that any less experienced speaker needs to know.

The communicators selected to be the faces of the project do also have to receive other type of support, and all of project management has to participate in their preparation. Prior to any commentary from them, the following should be in place:

- the message box: including the jointly elaborated messages, with the correct statements and examples.
- Q+A material: staff should jointly brainstorm the potential questions that may arise as an open press event, a press conference or afterwards.
- Training: although a costly solution, inexperienced speakers can be given training to handle more difficult, hostile situations. If this is not possible due to scarce funding, practicing can also be of great value.

4.2. Potential supporters

4.2.1. professional implementers

Professional implementers, including social workers and teachers working with families in municipalities have special communication credibility, stemming from their professional expertise and thorough, often long-standing knowledge of the target group. Therefore persuading them in gaining their support is already quintessential from a communication perspective. They must be consulted with anyhow on the program's professional

implementation, and consultation should also cover the formulation of communication recommendations. This is the group most prone to a stable change in attitude according to the literature, through role identification. In their case, we can refer to professional and legal ethos, that allow them to identify with the interests of Roma children and families.

4.2.2. recognised professional and moral figures

At the same time, there is a far **broader group** of recognised communication figures that also have the power to shape discourse: the informal leaders on who both the media and a wider audience keep an eye on. Examples are the local priest or a major local employer. Their support of the program can do much for its success. If their direct support for the program cannot be obtained, a broader issue (e.g. discussing the situation of poverty within the municipality) can provide a platform for identifying the most open protagonists, who can then be contacted informally. This logic can also prevent the premature leaking of plans.

The strongest means of inclusion and communication is to involve these prominent figures in project implementation, for example in Romania's Grădinari, where the educational staff, as well as the general practitioner, were involved in supporting the project for the benefit of the Roma, based on the mutual benefits which the participation in the project brought to them (improving the educational results of children and the health situation of the most destitute segment of the Roma local population).

4.2.3. Other supporting speakers

External endorsement is often needed when implementing an inclusion project. From time to time, perhaps in the face of difficulties or on other occasions, non-local experts can be asked to voice their support for the project's stakeholders, able to lend significance to the project with their mere presence, recognition or the authority of the organisation they represent. Experts, whose voice is valuable not only for the local, but the national population as well. Such partners and supporting speakers may include nongovernmental organisations showing sensitivity towards the topic, local government associations, leaders and stakeholders of other successfully implemented inclusion programs, ombudsman and — optimally — leaders of public bodies.

Celebrities

Could celebrities, popular and in the limelight, but with less professional credibility play a role in projects? Yes, but only to a limited extent. For example if celebrities take part in painting a school building, identification with the celebrities will spur others to support the initiative and show solidarity, or at least tone down open opposition to silence. The celebrities often keep a distance from contentious matters. Their impact is also limited, and their involvement to merely served to spark interest in the general public and promote the program. No local battles will be won based on their participation in all likelihood. If a case gains national significance due to its symbolic nature or the interests it impinges on, their impact will be minor compared to the severity of conflicts.

Nevertheless if famous entertainers identifying with the spirit of the program can be invited to community forming events or events celebrating the program launch or key stations milestones, or concerts linked to such events, their performance, presence and possible commentary may reinforce the project's message.

4.3. Potential “collaborators”

As it was mentioned earlier, in some cases it's an option to use the European Union as a reference point in the communication of a project. Sometimes a local government can justify its actions by emphasizing the European law and the steps, which have to be taken as consequences of the regulation. However this concept can be broadened up: by

incorporating the EU and moreover other international organisations (i.e. UN), or domestic charity organisations to the project – and name them as driver or main contributor of the action – the local tension can be reduced or even eliminated. This is exactly what happened in Pécs, (Hungary) where both the UNDP and the Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta (Hungarian NGO) had been involved in the project and they both had been used as the main instigators of the program.

5. defining target groups

Even if executing parallel targeted strategies for three of four groups within a communication strategy is not feasible, examining these groups during planning could yield valuable information for crafting the strategy. The following section takes a look at the key groups.

5.1. the community directly affected

The community directly affected is involved to varying degrees across different types of projects. For the most inventive programs, children of the Roma community travel far, and even if they feel that their housing or educational environment may substantially improve, they nevertheless have to venture out into the unknown, leaving behind their familiar and safe surroundings. Roma inclusion projects generally try to address long-standing exclusion or a situation that is the aggregate of multiple disadvantages. These disadvantages are lack of information, the insufficient familiarity in using public participation tools or advocating before the non-Roma for their own interests. Also very often defencelessness to local power-relations.

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An example of inclusion: “what do they wish for?”

The mayor of Kavarna visits the slum settlement almost every week to discuss current issues. These consultations shaped program planning and prompted a change in his own views: *“Initially I thought that Roma need social housing but during my first mandate I visited almost every week the Roma neighbourhood and talked to people there. Thus I understood that Roma do not need social houses but opportunities to get ownership and build their homes. Actually, Roma people told me: “We do not need social houses; we need legalization of our homes, good infrastructure and building plots where to build new houses”. They proposed the illegal landfill next to their neighbourhood to be cleaned, regulated and given for new building... I thought over their words and decided that there was no anything wrong in their requirements. They just wanted to have the same living standards as the rest of the local community...”* (Liliya Makaveeva: The strategic communication in Kavarna. See at Case studies)

Addressing the entire Roma community (and not just their leaders) and reassuring them that the municipality's leadership will not leave them to their own devices is essential in these projects; it is no coincidence that an often heard criticism is “they came here and then left us on our own”. This shift must be assisted, and its relevance goes beyond just communication. It is no coincidence that due to resistance from part of the majority population or stemming from the handover of political power, some families will make contradicting statements compared to the past or statements contrary to their apparent interest, or even back out of the program. Moreover, some solutions has been difficult to assess and were divisive, for instance the relocation of families from a destitute settlement to another segregated settlement, albeit featuring slightly better living conditions. In May 2012, a week before the local elections, the municipality of Baia Mare (Romania) issued a decision to relocate between 100 and 150 families from Craica to the premises of a chemical factory closed down

in 2009 (Cuprom). While field visits of civil society representatives have revealed that the opinions of the relocated families were divided, with some of them considering that the relocation was a positive action leading to better living conditions, another share of the Roma considered that they should have stayed in Craica. A short period after the relocation, a small number of families actually moved back to the original settlement¹⁵.

It has been documented that in some cases the Roma parents might question or even be opposed to desegregation interventions, stating that their children did not complain about anything and could not understand why such a decision had been taken by the court, like in **Sarisske Michalany, Slovakia; Nyíregyháza, Hungary**. This risk can be mitigated with continuously maintained communication and the inclusion of stakeholders enabling them to internalize the program. Oftentimes the community itself needs to be persuaded, as they do not always automatically support programs out of fear or because of lacking relevant information, etc. There is no better tool to minimize these problems than to emphatically include stakeholders in both planning and implementation from the very beginning and also efforts to better understand the concerns of the Roma. This can also be converted into communication opportunities through joint events.

It's important to extend the time frame of the preparation of the program in some potentially difficult situations. Sometimes minimum 1-2 years are needed to get the two sides (Roma and non-Roma population, or Roma population and local government) to communicate to each other, without having in mind any kinds of desegregation programs. By involving some professional coaches who spend most of their time in the area it is possible not only to get the parties (especially the Roma community) to look into the future and exchange information about the potential development of the community but also to identify relevant issues together, which issues can be easily solved by the local government. (The strongest example was at one place to move a bus station to the other side of a busy road. It didn't cost a lot of money but became invaluable for the Roma parents who can save their children from running across that road every single day) Once trust has been built up and maintained between the parties by solving smaller issues it is much easier to plan and communicate about even more significant interventions.

Assistance (instead of cooperation) results in stigmatisation

The case study on affirmative action in Romania provided valuable information on how the flawed implementation of such a program can give rise to a feeling of discrimination among the majority and a lack of self-confidence among beneficiaries: "policy implementers should be aware of the tendency certain stakeholders or the larger public have to stigmatise such measures and inferiorise the groups accessing them. In order to avoid this phenomenon, it is important to select champions and supporters who can efficiently combat stigma and encourage users to access the measures, as well as foster support from the various other stakeholders (teachers, parents, classmates)".

At the same time, those who have never cohabited with Roma and whose children are meeting Roma children for the first time in classrooms must also be regarded as direct stakeholders, as they are particularly exposed to panic-raising tactics. Often, it suffices to enroll the children elsewhere or mention this as an option: this is what transpired in Slovakia in response to the petitions regarding mixed classes, and in **Pazardzhik, (Bulgaria¹⁶)** where in

¹⁵ Chirițoiu, A., Constantin, A., *Field visit report, Baia Mare, 28-29 June 2012*, internal document.

¹⁶ <http://www.mecem.sk/rpa/?id=press&lang=slovak&show=23145>

the beginning of September 2012, parents of twenty four Bulgarian first-graders cancelled their children's studies.¹⁷

The size of this group obviously varies from one project to the next: school desegregation projects are often faced with the long-term and intense involvement of majority children and their parents, to a degree only seen among direct neighbours in the context of settlement closure projects.

It becomes here really important, that communication early on in the program really gains significance, as does the continuous availability of dedicated staff to handle any arising issues or enquiries.

5.2. Broad public opinion

The boundaries and internal divisions of the **broader majority target group** are the most blurred, but they are all voters and their opinion cannot be ignored. In most cases, they represent the largest group, and the objective with regard to them is most often not persuasion, but the prevention of open resistance. Generally the recognised figures of the group should be identified to support the project, which can lead to success. Preliminary opinion polls and consultations, for instance on matters of local education — and which can include questions such as “what kind of auxiliary services do you think are necessary to allow Roma children joining your children's class to effectively take part in class work?” — can shed light on opinions and sensitise this broad group. Such questions may in and of themselves serve to sensitise, not to mention that ideas can be used during program planning and references.

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Do not be prejudiced about prejudice: the silent majority is varied

Opinion polls show that Roma inclusion can be built on some support coming from the majority. When asked about the solutions, which should be implemented for Roma inclusion Romanian respondents quoted education as most likely solution (with 57% of the population mentioning it either on the first or second place) and inclusion on the labour market (41% of respondents)¹⁸. A survey from 2010 shows that 69% of the non-Roma population considers that the Government has not done enough for Roma inclusion.¹⁹ Further, the same survey finds that education (58%) and literacy and professional training (40%) are, according to the non-Roma, the priority areas of intervention. In Hungary as well the education of Roma children is also considered important. More than 80% agree with the statement that „all Roma children have the right to go to integrated classes with non-Roma” (Bernát, 2010).

There are signs that give reason for hope, such as the interpretation of various conflicts, as confirmed by a TÁRKI survey conducted in 2003, spanning 1544 communities²⁰. The survey revealed that in 2003, municipality conflicts were perceived by local government leaders as ethnic conflicts to largely different degrees from one region to the next. Conflicts were most frequently deemed as being driven by ethnic motives in Northern Hungary and the Northern Great Plains, where there is a large Roma minority, but only in a third of municipalities. (And one in a quarter of municipalities in South Trans-Danubia, which also has a high percentage of Roma.) (see <http://www.tarki.hu/adatbank-h/kutjel/pdf/a508.pdf>)

¹⁷

<http://www.vesti.bg/bulgaria/obshtestvo/niamalo-etnicheski-konflikt-v-pazardzhik-3281551>;
http://archive.bnt.bg/bg/news/view/37339/paralelka_se_razcepi_zaradi_romska_integracija
<http://www.mediapool.bg/i-dve-uchitelki-napusnaha-sled-otpisvaneto-na-24-detsa-ot-paralelka-s-romcheta-news170337.html>

¹⁸ National Council for Combating Discrimination and the Romanian Institute for Evaluation and Strategy (2013). *Perceptions and Attitudes regarding Discrimination*, available at http://www.ires.com.ro/uploads/articole/ires_cncd_perceptii-si-atitudini-privind-discriminare-2013.pdf

¹⁹ Romanian Institute for Evaluation and Strategy (2010). *The Public Perception on the Roma Minority*, available at http://www.ires.com.ro/uploads/articole/perceptia_publica_a_minoritatii_rome_sondaj_ires.pdf

²⁰ Id. <http://www.tarki.hu/adatbank-h/kutjel/pdf/a508.pdf>

5.2.1. Turning the uncertain into supporters

A rare opportunity not to be ignored is for municipal leaders to take central action based on an intention conceived within the community. An inclusion initiative to improve the situation of the Roma minority conceived by the majority can be much more compelling, averting many difficulties, obstacles and dilemmas. The case of Gyöngyös (Hungary) shows that this can happen and quite successfully at that. Parents of non-Roma children stood up for the inclusion of Roma children by the city's leaders, to give them access to the same standard of education as their own children. There was no resistance from the Roma stakeholders, and the efforts came to fruition.

Even a spark of initiative from the majority side should be supported. Citing shared local values can be compelling, for instance, the many initiatives of the mayor of Grădinari can be easily translated in media coverage to represent thrift and sound management, concepts valued by Romanians, especially in the context of a largely inefficient public administrative apparatus. When these concepts are vehiculated and built upon, it is more difficult to express opposition to interventions.”

5.3. Open detractors and the dynamics triggered by them

An ambitious local Roma inclusion project can trigger a multitude of criticism driven by a diversity of motives. Their preliminary assessment, a detailed analysis of detractors and their interests, messages and possible replies are essential for communication. Take a look at some partly overlapping groups that nevertheless deserve individual attention and individual messages.

Criticism can come from the **local elite** fearing for their “privileged” status, such as sparing their children from sharing schools with Roma. They are the ones with significant contact networks and therefore wield the most influence as critics, but also the ones that can withdraw from the matter (enrolling their children in another school, establishing a foundation school, etc.) and probably live in an area unaffected by housing inclusion programs.

Criticism can also come from **local stakeholders** fulfil that the inclusion program may jeopardise their fragile status (e.g. housing prices will go down in street where Roma relocate to) or their safety (often regarding the arrival of the first Roma family were first Roma classmate as the beginning of the end). Opposition from these camps is often driven by panic and organisation within them is akin to the dynamics of panic. A major dilemma of these programs is how to handle such decisions supported by local leaders but treated with suspicion or fear by the population, and to avoid the emergence of panic. Such panic not only spreads if fear gains ground, but also of supporters become less audible. As the voices of detractors rise, a spiral of silence²¹ can emerge, seeing supporters go silent as opposing voices become louder. These can create a climate where the undecided will feel that criticism represents the mainstream view.

Similarly to panic, these fears are difficult to dispel with rational arguments and are maintained by demonising the source of the fear. Contrary to rational argumentation, these

²¹ see also

http://www.utwente.nl/cw/theorieenoverzicht/Theory%20clusters/Mass%20Media/spiral_of_silence/

fears can be appeased through meetings and by creating points of contact and joint activities with the affected Roma.

A special scenario is when panic spreads among the **implementers**, which can affect school inclusion programs in particular. A fear expressed by some teachers anxious is how they will handle the educational lag of pupils transferred from Roma schools, characterised by poor academic performance, or tensions within the classroom. We have already mentioned the frequent fatalism associated with Roma programs, but in this case these anxieties may be well-founded. Adequate professional preparation, the presentation of good practices and the reinforcement of professional role identification could be the solution in both cases.

An important area to analyse separately is the **political opposition** and the appropriation of the topic as a political battlefield. The most harmful thing for Roma inclusion projects is if they become victim of local political battles. It is no coincidence that the majority of successful anti-poverty programs (such as Conditional Cash Transfer programs) were launched after securing broad political support. On the face of it, the opposition could benefit from the failure of any local government program, but this is only at a first glance. The key question is whether we can convince them that there are common interests that are no place for partisan politics. This can either be achieved with effective and transparent decision preparation in some cases, and by persuading them that it would be embarrassing not to support a project in other cases. The first framework of interpretation is defined by the active party, in this case the decision-maker. If detractors are attempting to thwart the program for clearly political motives, this should be highlighted, and our argument based on the premise that poverty sees no political colour. We can also organise situations involving the Roma community (for instance an on-field representative meeting) where it would be embarrassing for opponents to be absent, but also to openly criticise. Political debate on inclusion is often fuelled by the fact that critics are not in a position of debate, and monologues are given in parallel. The consultations in Valkovna (Slovakia) displayed the following dynamics: following up the cooperation with the public servants and NGO representative the mayor decided to organise several meetings. In the words of the NGO representative the atmosphere at the first meeting was very tense and people used aggressive language. At the second meeting certain part of the crowd understood that their attitude was not right and this group of people decided to save their reputations. The third meeting was completely different. The atmosphere was very friendly and he was even invited to visit the house of one of the non-Roma councillors.” (Besides this, there was an attempt to appeal the mayor. She was also called a “gipsy mayor”, non-Roma citizens stopped to greet her and she received warnings about possible physical threats.)

6. Challenges and addressing them

Although we should hope for the best for every project, it is nevertheless wise to prepare for the worst. Any of the aforementioned crises or crises triggered by other reasons not only pose obstacles to the inclusion project, but hinder its implementation and may undermine the reputation of its initiators and harm the entire community.

6.1. Inclusion project sensitivity

Even less ambitious projects are exposed to different crises, the shift towards political extremism that has been unfolding over the past decade in the entire region, tensions between the Roma minority in the majority often prevailing in communities and the scarcity of resources, rendering efforts to change the status quo a sensitive issue and warranting caution. A negative comment, a misunderstood announcement or an omitted circumstance during planning is often enough to bring the crisis situation to a head. To which such situations, a strategic communication preparation even better adapted to the project should be taken into consideration.

6.2. Crisis communication preparation

Sound reason dictates that the assessment of all possible crisis situations and the mapping of their communication implications are fundamental interests, even if most of them have no or little chances of materialising.

The absence of crisis communication preparation will sooner or later lead to a time shortage when crisis hits, which results in haste, the conveying of false messages, flawed decisions and at the end of the day, may jeopardise the success of the entire project. The objective of a crisis communication plan in the context of strategic communication planning is to prevent, or at least mitigate damage to the reputation of the project or the implementing organisation and help maintain continuous and smooth implementation during the turmoil.

To plan effective crisis communication, the local government conducting the inclusion project must assess the environment affected by the project accurately and in-depth, including the target audience, potential partners, competitors or opponents, i.e. all stakeholders. This assessment can be substituted with various analyses and measurements mentioned under project planning. The second step involves taking inventories of all the sources of risk to the project's successful implementation. Once these have been identified, a specific plan should be drawn up, strictly regulating the tasks to be performed. Annex 3 includes a guideline defining the steps for minimising losses.

6.3. New platforms

Social media is now inevitable not only for anti-Roma political parties and movements, but essentially any community aiming to communicate, but including the local government planning Roma inclusion projects. They are expected to have social media presence including a Facebook profile, Twitter account or other tools afforded by local platforms. These platforms are addressed in a separate chapter among the management of challenges because due to their novelty, they represent a risk just as much as an opportunity for the implementation of projects.

6.3.1. Benefits of these new platforms

There is no denying that social media, or at least its most popular forms widely used within

the region, have become an integral part of communication activity. This stems from a dual reason: it can be used to reach a large slice of the target audience, and also the power of trends wields a coercive power, in other words a program with no social media presence is not a program. The latter claim can of course be misleading.

Social media provides access to the following groups:

- International public opinion, members of the international press and citizens generally receptive to the topic
- Domestic national public opinion, members of the press, other organisations and citizens receptive (in multiple senses of the word) to the topic
- Younger generations among local stakeholders A perhaps surprising statement, no doubt largely based on assumptions, is that almost certainly a large slice of younger generations has access to some form of social media even in the poorest regions, and actively shares or receives images and communicates using these channels. A large portion of the younger generation (14+) of stakeholders could possibly be accessed quickly, easily and in a meaningful manner using social media even in the smallest communities.

The guarantee of speed is another key advantage besides access; new information can be disseminated among target groups the quickest using social media. Not to mention the motivational aspect of these platforms. Even if the grassroots nature of the movements facilitated by them should be perceived with reservations (possible American assistance), recent global and European happenings has confirmed that tens of thousands of people can be mobilised using social media platforms (protests in Hungary against the government's plans for an intranet tax, which drew thousands of people on two consecutive occasions, spurred primarily by social media).

6.3.2. Challenges of new platforms

These platforms must be actively managed. The call for continuous resources and attention and the expertise, without which all their benefits are worthless. A Facebook page managed by someone lacking expertise will go entirely unremarked, and a large fan base can only be created and maintained with continuous presence and professional planning.

Access to stakeholders — the most important target group within the project — is not guaranteed, and social media presence can only be interpreted over a broader range. In addition, social media pages may (and in all likelihood, will) also attract detractors alongside supporters. Adroit trolls may quickly bring down a Facebook page, or at least hinder the work of page managers with their on-going bullying and negative comments.

In a nutshell, adopting social media is recommended only if the required expertise (which is available online) and human resources are available, and the project owner has duly assessed its advantages and drawbacks.

SWOT analysis

The following chart is a schematic example of a SWOT analysis. The elements used in the chart are only examples and are not part of a specific project. When preparing the analysis, take into consideration that the majority of opportunities arise from strength, while most threats arise from weaknesses. There are of course exceptions, for instance when threats arise from environmental circumstances rather than the project's weaknesses.

Strengths	Weaknesses
Strong majority in the council Beginning of the governing period Well formed media relations both locally and regionally	Strong prejudice against Roma in the majority citizens Divided Roma population in the area of the project Lack of human capacity in the council ...
Opportunities	Threats
Smooth decision making Strong support from the press Solving more challenges in one (for example: infrastructure and housing at the same time) ...	Possible counterattacks against the project Existing extreme right activists in the neighbourhood Problematic crisis handling ...

Guidelines for handling reporter and journalist questions

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Do not fear publicity. Failure to comment will only create the impression that you have something to hide and may see the spread of misleading or false information in the news (also regarding you, personally).
If you have nothing to say at the moment for instance because you are in the middle of a process or waiting for the findings of a study that may significantly shape the project, then say when you will be able to comment, and why. Avoid “no comment” type remarks.
Only state what you are certain of. If you have any doubts, share them. If you do not know something, say it; do not guess or forecast.
If possible, do not deny/refute, but state affirmatively. Do not say what you do not know, do not think, do not believe, will not do, what will not happen, etc., always talk about what you do now, what did happen, what you will do.
Use plain language, as the audience watching the news are not professionals and are not familiar with complex professional terminology. If they do not understand something, they will be wary and mistrustful. This is important for practical considerations as well: television (radio and many print or online media outlets) constantly face shortages of length, and only have capacity to briefly cover topics; if you do not express yourself simply, the journalist will edit your statements and do it for you.
Keep it short and concise. Never talk longer than you need to. This not only helps the reporter (who will have less cutting or editing to do), but also yourself, as you will not come away with the feeling that nothing he said was used.
Always strive to imagine yourself in the viewer’s situation, and talk about what is important for them (the public), not you.
Be prepared to speak, and know what you want to say. Rehearse key phrases ahead of time.
If you're contacted by more than three editors or journalists, receive them together instead of separately, and make joint statements before this group. You will save time and be consistent in your statements.
In a news report, you will probably be given the chance to speak once for no more than 10 to 15 seconds. During studio sessions, you should limit yourself to 45-50 seconds to answer each question. The reporter will intervene if you go on for too long, and you will not be able to finish your train of thought.
News items usually focus on facts, but the reporter will sum them up. You will be consulted in the majority of cases to confirm the facts and share your opinion. The journalist, ideally, will not state its opinion. Take advantage of this to state yours, share your feelings and the story. This is what reporters are looking for when interviewing individuals.
The reporter's question is almost never included in news reports (they are cut from the footage). Therefore if you want your statements to end up in the final report, use complete sentences (that can be understood even without the question).
Television is an image-heavy genre. Allow the camera crew to take footage of inserts besides filming the interview.
When inserts ore additional shots are filmed, adhere to the same message you said during the interview. The camera’s microphone will be on, and sentences uttered during these takes are often used in the final footage. (Whenever you see a camera, it can also see and hear you.)
Do not put on your Sunday best for the interview, and stick to your regular work wardrobe. For studio sessions, take cues from the anchor’s wardrobe. Avoid black, white, densely striped or small patterned items or accessories, as they can interfere with the camera and be unpleasant for viewers.
When being interviewed, always look at the reporter and not into the camera; It is essential to always maintain eye contact.
Do not cross your arms, as despite giving you a sense of security, it will put you in a defensive position in the eyes of viewers.
Depending on national legislation (this could vary from country to country), you have the right to know what others thought of you and may request this information from the reporter. You also have the right to know which of your statements will be quoted and the introduction used by the reporter. It will be read to you on the telephone, and if you hear any mistakes correct them. (In case of print media, you can see the section relevant to you beforehand; ask the reporter to send it or read it to you.)
The strongest tool for convincing the public is the speaker's personality, belief and commitment to the topic. It is essential that you communicate and demonstrate this belief through your statements. Do not try to conceal your passion with a neutral attitude that you may regard as serious; this is counter-productive.

Crisis communication preparation template for inclusion projects

Assess the risks.

Effective preparation calls for the assessment of potential crisis situations by asking the following questions:

- What crisis situations may arise within the organisation? (including strikes or demonstrations , legislative changes or personal issues affecting leaders or staff members)
- What types of losses can afflict the organisation?
- What are the most and the least probable crisis situations that may strike?
- Which crisis situations can trigger manageable and unmanageable risks?

After thoroughly assessing the environment and potential crisis situations, we can determine whom project leaders should address and a crisis, when and how.

Define the messages.

No more than three key messages should be selected for each type of crisis and applied consistently. Sincerity is key in crisis situations (as well). Talk about the changes that have taken place and their impact; what was done and why by project leaders to avoid difficulties and what are the forthcoming steps.

Define your target groups.

Do not admit anyone involved in the project when defining target groups. The above specified target groups segmentation can serve as a basis, however the following segmentation can be used as a guideline due to the unique nature of crises:

- Internal communication (towards staff members and leaders)
- External communication (towards both the affected and unaffected segments of the population, partners, suppliers, subcontractors, political groups and nongovernmental organisations)
- Professional communication (towards supervisory bodies and authorities)

Choose the right tools and procedures.

Choose the right tools for delivering the message is defined for each target group.

Tools:

- Internal communication tools (intranet, letter, e-mail, internal newsletter or newspaper)
- Website
- Social media sites: Facebook, Twitter, etc.
- Press releases
- Press conferences
- Interviews
- Presentations, town hall meeting
- Video messages
- Communicating with the media is a key component in preparing for crisis communication and for communication planning in general.
- An accurate press list is the foundation of communication. The list should specify the names, positions and contact details (mobile and landline telephone, e-mail address) of contact persons for each media outlet.
- Press conferences should be organised if the journalist questions are expected. Otherwise, a press report delivered to the press or information conveyed directly to a reporter suffices.

Define the tasks to be discharged.

Define a schedule alongside the detailed specification of tasks to determine the timing and timeframe for the various steps. Define the persons responsible for each task. It is essential to maintain continuous communication and keep stakeholders informed of all phases of the crisis. The first step should always be notification of the employees, local government staff, teachers, social workers, etc. participating in the

project, even if this may seem self-evident in case of smaller organisations.

Set up a communication team and define individual tasks.

To set up a team, you need names and positions, as well as an accurate definition of tasks and responsibilities. Appoint a communication team leader and a person in charge of performing the tasks of the crisis communication plan.

When selecting team members, use the following criteria as guidelines:

- Members need to be proactive, able to take the initiative and make quick decisions in urgent situations.
- They should be thoroughly familiar with the project, the implementing organisation and its objectives.
- The project leader (or its deputy, vested with full rights) should be included in the team, as well as the communication staff member, a representative of the stakeholders, an attorney if possible and a staff member capable of issuing statements (if different from the aforementioned four persons).

How should a crisis communication team be selected?

- Prepare a list of the tasks to be discharged. Who is most competent for which tasks? Roles can of course be combined in case of smaller projects or staff.
 - Spokesperson (in charge of making statements)
 - Media manager (communicating with the media, drafting press reports)
 - Team member in charge of external communication (with partners, authorities, governmental and nongovernmental organisations)
- Prepare a detailed description on how to clearly and accurately perform these tasks.

Prepare and continuously update a list of target groups to reach and the media outlets to reach them.

Successful communication calls for quickly conveying information to all stakeholders. Draw up a contact list of all stakeholders (communication target groups) to most quickly deliver the necessary messages to them.

In addition, define in advance and continuously update the contact details of editorial boards and journalists to be sought out. For a project stretching on over several months or even years, this data — taking account of the fluctuation rate within the media — may change several times.

The international press can be of great help in acute situations. It is important to recognise the international news agencies, papers and journalists active in the region, who are already sensitised to minority and human rights issues and can surely become involved in crisis communication in the event of attacks.

Supporters are needed.

Seeking out potential supporters early on in the project-planning phase is key. The supporters may be nongovernmental organisations, local governments having successfully implemented similar projects, ombudsman (where applicable), nationally (or internationally) recognised and influential politicians or other pundits. Close ties must be established with them to enable their intervention in the event of crisis.

Create a space for receiving the press.

In the event of a crisis (or any other proactive communication initiative), it is important to give the arriving journalists and crewmembers all the help they need. Creating an area with Internet access (if possible) and electricity for notifying members of the press is essential. Make sure there is enough light or artificial light. (Or consider the option of receiving the press outdoors.)