

Handbook on Advocating for the Human Rights of Roma and Sinti Women



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*Handbook on Advocating for the Human Rights
of Roma and Sinti Women*

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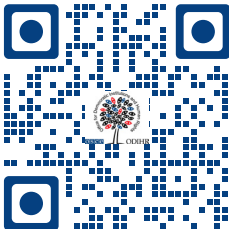
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Designed by Michael Lusaba

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Abbreviations

CEDAW	United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CSOs	Civil society organizations
ECRI	European Commission against Racism and Intolerance
EIGE	European Institute for Gender Equality
GREVIO	Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence
NHRIs	National human rights institutions
NEBs	National equality bodies
ODIHR	OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
pSs	participating States
UN Women	United Nations Programme for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

Foreword

In 2003, 57 OSCE participating recognized that Roma and Sinti women are often victims of discrimination and that action tailored to their needs is required. Across the OSCE region, Roma and Sinti women continue to face a complex reality of systemic and intersectional inequalities. They often find themselves at the intersection of various systemic barriers, facing compounded exclusion based on their ethnicity, gender, socio-economic status, class and other identities. This frequently results in their exclusion from participative and decision-making processes, leaving their voices unheard and their needs unmet.

Advancing the rights of Roma and Sinti women is not merely a matter of inclusion, but a fundamental requirement for gender equality and justice. Lasting social prosperity is predicated on a system whereby everyone has the agency to contribute to and shape their future. Roma and Sinti women must benefit equally from the freedom to engage in public and political affairs.

ODIHR remains committed to assisting participating States in enhancing the meaningful participation of Roma and Sinti women within legislative and policymaking frameworks. By ensuring their lived experiences are integrated into the core of policy development and by working closely with Roma and Sinti women's organizations and advocates, we strive to uphold the principles of agency, representation and equity.

This handbook is an important step forward in our determination to promote the rights and empowerment of Roma and Sinti women. It aims to give civil society organizations, activists and community leaders the necessary tools to navigate the policy landscape, build powerful coalitions and secure the resources needed for sustainable change. It moves beyond theory, integrating the methods and strategies developed by Roma and Sinti women's activists to provide evidence-based approaches for influence.

It is my hope that this handbook serves as a vital tool for Roma and Sinti women's organizations and their allies alike. By working together to dismantle structural inequalities and embrace intersectional perspectives, we can ensure that the commitments made by our participating States are translated into meaningful, lasting improvements in the lives of Roma and Sinti women everywhere.

Maria Telelian,
ODIHR Director

Introduction



Introduction

Roma and Sinti women face systemic, intersectional discrimination and racism, as well as exclusion from decision-making and mainstream human rights movements.¹ Supporting and empowering Roma women to make their own decisions and participate in all spheres of life is a matter of human rights, social justice and gender equality. It is also fundamental to ensuring inclusive and efficient societies that are safe and prosperous.

The OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) is mandated to support participating States (pSs) in combating racism and discrimination against Roma and ensuring their full and equal participation in all areas of life. The OSCE commitments acknowledge the particular inequalities facing women and call upon pSs to design tailored measures to address their needs.² Roma women's organizations play a vital role in advocating for Roma women's rights and ODIHR works closely with Roma civil society to support their strategic and programmatic action in this area. An important part of this work is providing training for Roma women activists on how to influence decision-making.³

This handbook was developed in response to a specific need identified by Roma women advocates in ODIHR's 2024 Needs Assessment of Roma and Sinti Women's Organizations and Activists.⁴ Participants emphasized that they struggle to sustain impactful advocacy, which weakens their ability to influence change. A lack of solidarity, low representation in government, limited funding and complex bureaucracy all hamper the impact of their work. The handbook is designed to help civil society organizations (CSOs) strengthen their understanding and practice of intersectional advocacy, through four practical steps. It sets

1 Throughout the handbook, the term 'Roma' is used to refer to 'Roma and Sinti' for the sake of brevity.

2 [OSCE Ministerial Council, Decision No. 3/03](#), "Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti within the OSCE Area", Maastricht, 1-2 December 2003; [OSCE Ministerial Council, Decision 4/13](#), "Enhancing OSCE efforts to implement the Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti Within the OSCE Area, With a Particular Focus on Roma and Sinti Women, Youth and Children", Kyiv, 5-6 December 2013.

3 [Capacity-Building Training for Self-advocacy of Roma Women and Girls in North Macedonia: Training Report](#), OSCE/ODIHR, 19 December 2022; Video, [Speaking out for yourself is key to achieving justice and equality, Roma women say](#), OSCE/ODIHR, 23 November 2022.

4 In 2024, ODIHR conducted a Needs Assessment of Roma and Sinti women's organizations and activists in North Macedonia, Romania, Spain and Ukraine (not published). The assessment explored three priority areas: organizational skills and capacity, thematic priorities and activities, and partnerships and alliances. A participatory mixed-methods approach combined desk research with 21 semi-structured interviews, three focus group discussions and an online survey. In total, 48 stakeholders were consulted, including Roma women's organizations, activists and partners. The findings outline key challenges, funding gaps and advocacy needs of Roma women's organizations while also highlighting good practices and informing ODIHR's future support to Roma women and communities, and participating States.

out ways to engage in policymaking, secure resources and sustain intersectional advocacy and includes examples of successful advocacy.

The handbook is chiefly aimed at Roma women's organizations, activists and community leaders, as well as wider Roma civil society. It should also be useful for pro-Roma allies and civil society advocates working on human rights, anti-discrimination and gender equality, as well as policymakers and donors committed to advancing Roma women's rights. The resources may also be of interest to international organizations and other institutions, offering insights into the challenges and solutions for effective advocacy partnerships.

Methodology

A mixed-methods approach used a variety of tools to collect data. Primary data was collected via two online surveys of Roma women's organizations.⁵ These results gave a broad overview of existing initiatives and identified the areas the handbook should prioritize. Desk research — building on the aforementioned Needs Assessment, similar publications, and international good practices — guided the secondary data collection and analysis. The methodology was informed by previous work in this area, advocacy frameworks and, most importantly, the voices and expertise of Roma women activists, integrating positive practices and successes into developing evidence-based tools for advocacy.

The handbook presents a four-step approach to advocacy:

1. Preparing for advocacy — focused on defining objectives, stakeholder mapping and research
2. Conducting advocacy — coalition-building, communication strategies and engagement with decision-makers
3. Reporting — documenting activities, presenting impact and ensuring accountability
4. Sustaining advocacy work — guidance on long-term planning, monitoring and evaluation, and capacity building

5 The forms were disseminated by email and social media platforms and shared across established Roma women's networks, including national and regional advocacy groups. It was also distributed among individual human rights defenders active in the field of Roma women's empowerment. These efforts gathered a total of 26 responses. Although the number of direct contacts was not recorded, the consultation was estimated to have reached approximately 60 to 80 organizations and individuals through targeted outreach and a significantly larger audience through secondary sharing within professional and advocacy networks.

Advocating for the Rights of Roma Women: An Intersectional Approach to Structural Inequalities



Advocating for the Rights of Roma Women: An Intersectional Approach to Structural Inequalities

Advocacy can be a powerful tool for change, especially in the face of the racism, discrimination and structural inequalities that Roma women continue to face across the OSCE region. Despite extensive policy commitments, Roma women remain under-represented at all levels of decision-making, marginalized in political and public life, and disproportionately affected by socio-economic inequalities. ODIHR's *Fourth Status Report*⁶ highlights the ongoing barriers faced by Roma women in education, employment, health, housing, access to justice and gender equality.

Roma women are particularly vulnerable to multiple and intertwined forms of discrimination. Examples include reported cases of gender-based violence with no police response or intervention and victims of human trafficking left without protection. Moreover, the intersecting characteristics of displaced Roma women feed a variety of experiences of exclusion, particularly against the backdrop of conflict/war. Roma women with disabilities, the elderly and the young face major challenges in securing refuge and accessing basic services, while reporting multiple and intersecting instances of discrimination and violence.

Advocacy to combat structural inequalities across multiple areas of life is even more challenging. Many national policy frameworks still do not incorporate intersectional perspectives to ensure that challenges faced by marginalized Roma women are adequately addressed. More work is needed on gender mainstreaming and targeted action to address the particular situation of Roma women.⁷

6 Published in December 2023, this five-yearly report assesses progress made by the OSCE states towards Roma inclusion and also outlines the challenges that remain. [Implementation of the Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti within the OSCE Area - Fourth Status Report](#), OSCE/ODIHR, 8 December 2023.

7 OSCE/ODIHR, *Fourth Status Report*, p. 19.

To be effective, advocacy must be strategic and well-prepared, and respond to both the challenges and opportunities within the policy landscape. Advocacy work must identify key priorities, build strong alliances and equip women's CSOs and activists with the knowledge and tools to exert real influence on decision-making processes. To be sustainable, advocacy groups need support in securing sufficient financial resources and overcoming difficulties in engaging with policymakers and partners.

Understanding intersectionality is essential to developing effective advocacy on behalf of Roma women. They experience intersecting forms of discrimination based on their ethnicity, gender and socio-economic status, as well as additional factors such as identity and residence documentation, statelessness or migration status, age or disability. Structural barriers, racial biases and gender-based stereotypes combine to prevent the full participation of Roma women across all spheres of life, whether private or public.

Intersectional advocacy must recognize and tackle the intersecting forms of inequality experienced by Roma women. Intersectional discrimination should be properly acknowledged and responded to at the policy level and integrated in broader equality and anti-discrimination frameworks as well as in Roma-specific policies. In the *Fourth Status Report*, ODIHR assessed that National Strategies for Roma Inclusion across the OSCE region lack intersectional measures and, therefore, risk failing to respond to the particular needs of the most excluded or vulnerable groups of Roma women.⁸

What is intersectionality?

Intersectionality provides a framework for understanding how different aspects of one's identity — such as ethnicity, 'race',⁹ gender or class — combine to create unique experiences of discrimination.¹⁰ Intersectionality helps explain why Roma women's challenges require integrated solutions that reflect both their ethnic and gendered realities. Applying an intersectional lens to Roma women's rights advocacy can ensure that efforts do not reinforce existing inequalities, but actively work to dismantle them.

⁸ OSCE/ODIHR, [Fourth Status Report](#), pp. 10 and 19.

⁹ The use of the term 'race' in this guide shall not imply endorsement by OSCE/ODIHR of any theory based on the existence of different races. It is a term widely used in international human rights standards, as well as in national legislation. This guide uses the term to ensure that people who are misperceived as belonging to another 'race' are protected against hate crimes.

¹⁰ Intersectionality is a concept originally introduced by legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw, who described how "the intersection of race and gender" creates forms of disadvantage not adequately addressed by single-issue analyses of discrimination (Crenshaw, [Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory, and Antiracist Politics](#), 1989, p. 139). Crenshaw later defined it as a way of "mapping the margins," to show how women of colour experience overlapping systems of oppression that cannot be understood in isolation (Crenshaw, [Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color](#), *Stanford Law Review*, Vol. 43, No. 6 (1991), p. 1244).

Additional resources on intersectionality:

- United Nations Programme for Gender Equality, *Intersectionality Resource Guide and Toolkit*
- Kimberlé Crenshaw, *Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory, and Antiracist Politics*; and *Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color*
- United Nations Network on Racial Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, *Guidance note on intersectionality, racial discrimination and protection of minorities*

Further reading on applying intersectionality in advancing the rights of Roma women:

- Angela Kocze and Raluca Maria Popa, *Missing Intersectionality: Race/Ethnicity, Gender, and Class in Current Research and Policies on Romani Women in Europe*
- E-Romnja, *Training manual* about intersectionality and multiple discrimination
- *Romnja Feminist Library* resources
- Sebijan Fejzula, *De-Whitening Romani Women's Intersectional Experience*



Understanding Advocacy

Understanding Advocacy

What is advocacy?

Advocacy refers to a set of activities aimed at influencing decisions, institutions or wider society to bring about positive change. It is a process through which individuals, community groups or civil society seek to raise awareness and shape policy frameworks for the better protection and promotion of human rights. Advocacy enables those most affected to participate directly and have their needs, interests and priorities reflected in decision- and policymaking processes.

Types of advocacy

For the purposes of this handbook, the focus is on two forms of advocacy:

- **Issue-based advocacy** focuses on addressing concrete issues that affect a certain group. It often centres on urgent or overlooked challenges and mobilizes voices and actions to address them. For example, Roma women's organizations in South-Eastern Europe documented barriers in accessing maternal health care and called for targeted improvements.
- **Policy-based advocacy** is directed towards laws, strategies, budgets and institutional frameworks. It addresses structural barriers and aims to secure reforms that advance equality and justice over the long term. For example, Roma women's groups in Bulgaria and Romania influenced the National Roma Integration Strategies to include gender-specific measures such as scholarships and employment initiatives for Roma women and girls.

Advocacy can be strengthened through additional approaches, including:

- **Community-based engagement** gives voice to Roma women and mobilizes collective responses at the community level. For example, a Roma organization in Romania mobilizes Roma women to raise awareness about domestic violence and strengthen community responses.
- **Media and public outreach** use traditional and digital platforms to raise awareness, challenge stereotypes and counter gender-based discrimination, while building positive

narratives of women's contributions. For example, Roma feminist activists in Spain and Central Europe use social media campaigns to counter anti-Roma narratives and promote positive images of Roma women.

- **International efforts** link local realities to regional and global frameworks, such as those of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, the European Union, the Council of Europe and the United Nations, holding member states accountable to their commitments. For example, Roma women's networks have contributed to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women shadow reports, ensuring that international bodies address the intersectional discrimination faced by Roma women.

The power of advocacy

Advocacy has the potential to make visible the needs of those who are often marginalized, to strengthen the accountability of duty bearers and to secure changes in policy and practice that improve lives. It can contribute to stronger protections against discrimination and violence, better access to socio-economic rights and more inclusive participation.

For the purposes of this handbook, advocacy is both a tool and a commitment: to challenge structural discrimination, to promote equal participation and to amplify the lived experiences of Roma women. Strengthened advocacy in these areas is central to advancing dignity, equality and justice across the OSCE region.



Practical Steps for Effective Advocacy



Practical Steps for Effective Advocacy

Step 1. Preparing for advocacy

This section covers advocacy planning: How to define the objectives and scope of advocacy work, conduct initial research and data collection, and identify stakeholders. It includes checklists, templates, examples and tips on, for example, stakeholder mapping, citizen consultations and fundraising strategies.

1.1 Defining advocacy scope, principles and objectives

Advocacy for Roma women's rights is complex, because the target group faces intersecting inequalities. To ensure advocacy work is targeted, effective and sustainable, the scope, principles and objectives must be clearly defined, respond to the changing concerns and ensure that Roma women's voices are central to the process.

Advocacy work must recognize the context and complexity of the issues Roma women encounter. These issues are interconnected and require an approach that tackles them in a variety of ways. Roma women's rights advocacy must address systemic barriers and focus on key areas for socio-economic inclusion and political representation — education, employment, health care, housing, political and public participation, gender equality and combating gender-based violence. It is also important to bear in mind the historical injustices and their impact on Roma women's lives and daily realities.

Scope

Defining the scope may be challenging, considering the wide range of issues and competing priorities. Even if the advocacy focuses on one area, other issues cannot be neglected and should, to some extent, be included in the objectives and messaging. Stakeholders will need to weigh the issues carefully.

- **Education** is a key driver for the empowerment, socio-economic and political inclusion of Roma women. Advocacy work should prioritize access to quality education as a

response to institutional and societal barriers e.g., discrimination, school and class segregation.¹¹

- **Economic empowerment** enables financial independence for women and contributes to their wellbeing and that of their communities. Advocacy should focus on creating opportunities for Roma women to access employment, vocational training and entrepreneurship programmes, including government subsidies and skills development. It may also address barriers related to child care, digital literacy and recognizing informal skills, and promote inclusive recruitment practices in the public and private sectors.¹² Collaboration with labour market institutions and employers' associations could provide sustainable and gender-sensitive pathways to decent work.
- **Access to health care** is critical for the well-being of women, and advocacy should focus on two areas. First, it should aim to improve Roma women's access to healthcare services and, in particular, to reproductive health care. Second, it needs to tackle systemic obstacles, such as discrimination in healthcare settings, lack of health insurance or documentation, poor living conditions, geographic isolation and limited access to information on available services.¹³
- **Housing** addresses inadequate living conditions. Advocacy should demand adequate housing conditions for Roma women and communities, but also the regulation of property and shared rights or ownership of housing units.
- **Public and political participation** is one way to influence policies that directly or indirectly affect Roma women's lives and communities. Advocacy work should promote the inclusion of Roma women in decision-making processes at all levels, from local governance to national and international bodies. It also requires the greater engagement of Roma women in consultative and participative processes that shape policy and legislation.
- **Combating gender-based violence** includes preventing violence through awareness-raising and capacity building, as well as providing survivors with support services, legal

11 [Roma women in nine EU Member States](#), European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), 4 April 2019.

12 Roma women remain among the least represented groups in the formal labour market, facing barriers such as low education levels, discrimination in hiring, unpaid or informal work and limited access to child care and professional networks. Some reports shows that only 19 per cent of Roma women are in paid employment, compared with 35 per cent of Roma men and 54 per cent of non-Roma women. More information at: [Roma and Travellers in Six Countries: Roma Women's Access to Employment](#), European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), 2020; [Factsheets on Roma Women's Employment](#), Council of Europe, 2021.

13 [Roma and Travellers in Six Countries: Roma Women's Access to Healthcare](#), European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), 23 September 2020; Dr. Zora Popova, [Empowerment of Roma and Traveller Women: A Change Under Construction](#), Council of Europe, September 2021.

protection and access to justice. To end impunity, prosecution efforts should also be strengthened, through a coordinated response across sectors (education, health care, employment etc.). Advocacy must address the gender-based violence experienced by Roma women and link violence-prevention work to forms of exploitation and ill-treatment, such as human trafficking, forced labour, abuse and harassment.¹⁴

Advocates should demonstrate how these issues are interrelated and mutually reinforcing. For example, lack of education hampers the economic empowerment and political participation of Roma women. Economic dependence enables gender-based violence, human trafficking and forced labour. Inadequate housing generates health problems and impedes access to education, and so on.

Intersectional discrimination should not be addressed solely through policies that directly target Roma women. Advocates should try to integrate the needs of Roma women into mainstream national and local policies, ensuring their concerns are properly recognized and addressed. For example, an advocacy initiative could focus on ensuring that Roma women's health needs are integrated into national gender equality and public health strategies. By advocating for measures such as mobile health services or culturally sensitive maternal care, Roma women's organizations can help mainstream their priorities within broader national frameworks rather than limiting them to Roma-specific programmes.

Principles

Any advocacy work has to be guided by a set of agreed principles. When defining these principles, advocates need to consider the characteristics and capacity of the target group, the diversity and complexity of the issues, and community participation. The principles guiding advocacy for Roma women's rights should be rooted in inclusivity, intersectionality and empowerment, and also consider collaboration and sustainability.

- **Inclusivity** ensures that the voices of Roma women from diverse backgrounds (rural, urban, young, elderly and those on the move) are heard and represented. Inclusive advocacy ensures that policy outcomes reflect the diversity of Roma communities, prevent the perpetuation of existing stereotypes and patterns of exclusion, and emphasize advocating for the most marginalized and least heard in society.
- **Intersectionality** recognizes and addresses the intersecting layers of inequality and abuse experienced by Roma women, which includes racism, sexism and social, economic and political exclusion. An intersectional approach ensures that advocacy

¹⁴ [Equality of Roma and Traveller Women and Girls](#), Council of Europe, September 2024; and Anikó Orsós and Senada Sali, [We Romani Women...](#), European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC), 25 November 2019.

work is tailored to the unique challenges of Roma women. It also strengthens the effectiveness and legitimacy of advocacy, as it allows organizations to design strategies that reflect the full complexity of Roma women's lived experiences and tackle the root causes of inequality rather than isolated symptoms.

- **Empowerment** covers approaches that provide capacity building, such as training in leadership, negotiation and strategic communication. In response to their needs and demands, advocacy work should aim to empower Roma women by building their skills, knowledge and capacity to advocate for their own rights. Empowerment is essential to improve an individual's confidence and agency, as well as to create a sustainable Roma women's civil society movement that can influence decisions.
- **Partnerships** foster coalition building between Roma women's civil society and mainstream civil society and advocates. This collaboration should also be strengthened by government bodies and international and donor organizations, to ensure that advocacy is more impactful and sustainable. Building inclusive and equitable partnerships expands outreach, mobilizes resources and amplifies collective voice, turning isolated efforts into coordinated advocacy for systemic change.
- **Sustainability** focuses on long-term solutions over short-term fixes. This includes advocating for policy change, stable funding and institutional support that will benefit Roma women's organizations in the long run. Sustainability ensures that advocacy achievements are embedded in institutional practices, creating lasting improvements in the lives of Roma women.

Applying advocacy principles in practice — E-Romnja (Romania)

E-Romnja is a feminist, non-profit organization that works to advance the rights, dignity and safety of Roma women and girls in Romania. The organization operates at community level as well as nationally and internationally. Its work combines grass-roots organizing, service access, community mobilization, public advocacy and policy engagement. E-Romnja describes its approach as building spaces where Roma women can speak, organize and claim rights in their own voice.

- **Inclusivity and community participation.** E-Romnja grounds its work in local action, led by Roma women and girls, which includes informal initiative groups at neighbourhood level. In the town of Mizil, E-Romnja helped Roma girls and young women to form a local group, identify needs in their community and present them to the local authorities. The model positions Roma women not as 'beneficiaries' but as decision-makers in their own communities, through visible public activities

such as petitions, cultural events in public spaces and requests for a women's meeting space.

- **Intersectionality.** The organization applies an intersectional approach to Roma women's rights. Their programmes address, inter alia, access to education and access to reproductive and maternal health care in under-served areas, as well as tackling the barriers faced by women without health insurance or stable employment when seeking essential services. This framing links gender-based discrimination with anti-Roma discrimination and socio-economic exclusion, and treats them as simultaneous rather than separate problems.
- **Empowerment and leadership.** A core part of E-Romnja's work is so-called 'citizenship from the grass roots led by Roma women', which supports Roma women with public speaking, holding authorities to account and negotiating with institutions. The organization supports Roma women and girls to act as local leaders, engage directly with public officials and articulate community priorities. This approach sees empowerment not only as individual confidence-building, but as collective political participation at local level.
- **Partnerships and coalition-building.** The organization works with other Roma rights organizations, as well as feminist and gender equality groups in Romania and abroad. These partnerships document rights violations, monitor access to services, engage in peaceful protests and build joint advocacy at national and international levels.
- **Sustainability.** E-Romnja's work is designed to be sustained within communities rather than limited to short-term interventions. The organization invests in creating stable local women's groups, training community members and supporting them over many years. For example, long-term programmes in communities such as Valea Seacă include leadership development, local dialogue with authorities and support for Roma women to navigate institutions such as health services and schools. This focus on continuity aims to build durable local structures led by Roma women, rather than temporary, project-based activities.

E-Romnja's advocacy work connects the local realities to institutional responsibility. It documents the systemic barriers affecting Roma women and girls and uses this to call for structural change at municipal and national level. The goal is both to respond

to individual cases and ensure that public authorities and service providers recognize and address anti-Roma racism, gender-based discrimination and socio-economic exclusion as connected forms of inequality.¹⁵

Objectives

The objectives should align with the identified needs and priorities, and be defined by Roma women's organizations and activists. While the scope describes the thematic area, issue or challenge, the objectives specify the concrete changes the advocacy aims to achieve within that area, detailing what the advocacy work seeks to influence, improve or transform. In this way, objectives help to break down the broader scope into actionable and measurable steps.

- **Policy influence** advocates for the inclusion of Roma women's needs in policy frameworks; these are often only vaguely reflected in Roma-related policies and are largely missing from gender equality or anti-discrimination policies. Advocates also pursue the implementation of (and improvements to) existing policies, as well as the development of new policies where gaps exist. To that end, it is essential that Roma women take part in the consultative process fully and equally throughout the policymaking cycle, from inception through implementation, to monitoring and impact assessment.
- **Capacity building** enables participants to advocate more effectively for their rights. It strengthens the organizational and professional capacities of Roma women's organizations and activists through training on fundraising, strategic communication, project management, leadership or other topics.
- **Awareness-raising** increases public knowledge about the challenges facing Roma women. It also aims to promote the inclusion of Roma women in all areas of life, by challenging stereotypes and discriminatory gender norms, and promoting positive narratives about Roma women.
- **Resource mobilization** helps to grow and sustain funding for Roma women's organizations, particularly from national governments and international donors. This includes simplifying access to institutional funding and advocating for dedicated funds for Roma women's initiatives.

¹⁵ [IntersectVoices in Europe — Combating discrimination against Roma women: Challenging intersectionality: Roma women's voices and experiences](#), E-Romnja, Bucharest, March 2021; [Research Report Phenja: Suroritatea dintre femei împotriva violenței de gen](#) [Research Report Phenja: Sisterhood between Women against Gender-Based Violence], E-Romnja, 2016 (Romanian).

- **Regional and international collaboration** fosters joint advocacy among Roma women's organizations by strengthening their collective voice and influence. This helps to raise awareness of the transnational struggle for Roma women's rights and supports the establishment of international networks. Collaboration between Roma women's civil society and broader gender equality organizations can be of additional mutual benefit, ensuring that Roma women's needs inform women's rights agenda and vice versa.

Tip: Using the SMART approach — setting objectives that are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound — helps ensure focus and accountability.

Example of a SMART objective: Increase Roma women's participation in local decision-making by **training 30 Roma women advocates** (number of direct participants) from grass-roots organizations in advocacy, communication and leadership skills within **12 months** (timeframe) and supporting them to take part in **at least five municipal consultations or working groups** (measurable outcome) on community development and equality policies.

Defining objectives for national and transnational advocacy

National level — Roma Women's Rights Network (North Macedonia)

The [Roma Women's Rights Network](#), coordinated by the Luludi Roma Women and Youth Association, is an informal coalition uniting Roma and pro-Roma organizations, activists and experts across North Macedonia. Its founding purpose was to strengthen the visibility and capacity of Roma women's collective advocacy within national gender equality and human rights frameworks.

- **Policy influence.** The Network advocates for the integration of Roma women's perspectives in national gender equality and anti-discrimination policies. It monitors compliance with the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Council of Europe's Istanbul Convention, publishing regular Monitoring Reports on the Situation of Roma Women (2018, 2021, 2025). These reports have informed national equality strategies, Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO)¹⁶ evaluations and government policy dialogue, contributing to evidence-based reforms.

¹⁶ GREVIO is the body of independent experts responsible for monitoring the implementation by the parties of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention).

- **Capacity building.** Through workshops, forums and mentorship initiatives, the Network strengthens the skills of Roma women activists in leadership, advocacy and community mobilization. Supported by programmes such as [Civica Mobilitas](#) and the [UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women](#), Luludi has improved the institutional capacity of member organizations and improved coordination across the country.
- **Awareness-raising.** Public campaigns, debates and media engagement have challenged stereotypes and highlighted the multiple forms of discrimination faced by Roma women. These initiatives promote the recognition of Roma women as equal stakeholders in national policy processes.
- **Resource mobilization.** The Network ensures the continuity of Roma women's activism by diversifying funding streams and advocating for sustained institutional support from national and international donors.
- **Regional and international collaboration.** The Network contributes to regional efforts through the [Unifying the Voices for Ending Violence against Women](#) project, supported by the United Nations Programme for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) and the European Union, and cooperates with other Roma women's organizations across South-Eastern Europe.¹⁷

Regional and transnational level — Feminist Collective of Romani Gender Experts

The [Feminist Collective of Romani Gender Experts](#) is a transnational network of Roma feminist scholars, policy professionals and activists from across Europe. The Collective emerged from previous collaboration among Roma gender professionals in Spain, Romania, Hungary, Serbia and Bulgaria, united by the recognition that Roma women were often the subject of gender equality policies but rarely engaged as experts in defining them.

- **Policy influence.** The Collective advances Roma feminist perspectives in European and international policy spaces. It contributes to consultations and reports by organizations such as UN Women, the Council of Europe, ODIHR and the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), ensuring that Roma women's experiences inform the human rights and equality agenda.

¹⁷ Roma Women's Rights Network, [Monitoring Report on the Implementation of the CEDAW and the Istanbul Convention 2020–2021](#), July 2022; Roma Women's Rights Network, [Monitoring Report on the Implementation of the CEDAW and Istanbul Convention with Focus on Roma Women and Girls](#), Skopje, 2025.

- **Capacity building.** Through training and workshops, the Collective has strengthened the political and digital advocacy capabilities of more than 200 Roma women and allies. Current projects increase knowledge about international human rights monitoring mechanisms, supporting participants from the United Kingdom, Spain, Hungary, Romania and Bosnia and Herzegovina to monitor and report human rights violations.
- **Awareness-raising.** By producing research — including open calls for papers — the Collective amplifies Roma feminist voices, creating narratives that challenge systemic racism while celebrating Roma women’s leadership and resilience.
- **Resource mobilization and partnerships.** The Network operates through voluntary collaboration and small-scale donor funding, leveraging partnerships with feminist, anti-racist and equality-focused institutions to ensure sustainability.
- **Regional and international collaboration.** As a transnational platform, the Collective exemplifies intersectional cooperation across borders and disciplines. Its initiatives promote Roma feminist scholarship, community-based approaches to justice and cross-regional solidarity among Roma and non-Roma gender experts.¹⁸

1.2 Research

Effective advocacy requires in-depth research of the issue with a structured and participatory approach. Clear articulation of the subject is necessary to shape the direction, scope, objectives and target audience. Research will help determine the most effective ways to communicate or guide capacity building or partnerships with advocates and collaborators. Ultimately, proper research helps ensure that policy goals and advocacy messages are evidence-based and responsive to identified needs. Here, it is particularly important to ensure that the research includes the participation and input of its target audience; research and advocacy concerning Roma women should meaningfully include their perspectives and participation.

In order to analyse a given topic, the starting point is to clearly define the research question. For example, research can focus on analysing gaps, identifying solutions for policy changes, or exploring possible programmes to be developed for Roma women.

¹⁸ “Intersectional Feminist Perspectives and Transnational Advocacy”, Feminist Collective of Romani Gender Experts internal report, 2024; [About the Collective](#), Feminist Collective of Romani Gender Experts website.

Examples of research questions

- What barriers to education do Roma children face, and are there barriers specifically affecting girls? Do non-Roma children, and girls in particular, face these barriers?
- How effective are the housing policies for Roma communities? Do they address the needs of women?
- Do Roma women have equal and non-discriminatory access to health care and to reproductive rights in particular?
- What are the main regulatory and societal barriers that limit Roma women's access to healthcare services, including reproductive rights?

Selecting the appropriate research design is key to ensuring that relevant information and data will be collected and analysed. Researchers often use a so-called 'mixed-methods approach' that includes quantitative and qualitative data collection methods. **Quantitative methods** often rely on desk research or surveys to measure the extent of a problem statistically, quantify priorities or identify patterns. **Qualitative methods**, on the other hand, provide more descriptive, in-depth insights into the lived experiences and social dynamics of the group.

- **Quantitative data** includes statistics on Roma women's access to various spheres of life, including education, health care, housing and employment, or public and political participation. These can be collected through surveys and studying datasets (i.e., national statistics, reports or tailored surveys). When available, data can be compared to the participation of Roma men or non-Roma women to see the differences and identify solutions, from both gender and ethnicity perspectives.
- **Qualitative data** gathers insights into the lived experiences of Roma women via interviews, focus groups and case studies. For example, focus groups held with Roma women from rural areas can reveal how lack of transportation, child care or identity documents restricts their access to health care or jobs, offering context that the quantitative data cannot capture.

Data collection

A range of complementary methods can be used to collect data for advocacy purposes, depending on the resources available and the type of information needed.

Surveys are a good way to gather information from many participants and identify common patterns or needs. They may be carried out online, by phone or in person, depending on what is most accessible for participants. To ensure reliability and trust, questions should be

clear and culturally appropriate and, whenever possible, Roma women should be involved in designing and conducting the survey. Surveys are particularly valuable for generating quantitative evidence to support data-driven advocacy and policy recommendations.

How to conduct a survey?

- Tailor the survey to the target audience, e.g., for Roma women living in rural areas you may conduct a face-to-face survey rather than an online one.
- Collect demographic data (age, gender, education, employment, residence, etc.) that will explain the interplay between disparities and different characteristics.
- Offer pre-defined responses, and use range (e.g., for age) and scales (e.g., for level of agreement) to gather quantifiable data that is easy to analyse.
- Ask open-ended questions to identify gaps and collect information on root causes and the effects of the problem.
- Reach a diverse sample, e.g., surveying different groups of Roma women will help to get a better picture on intersectionality.
- Train your data collectors on gender and cultural sensitivities while ensuring privacy, ethical and trauma-informed considerations.
- Provide room for additional comments.

Secondary data analysis involves reviewing and interpreting information that has already been collected by others to gain additional insights or verify findings. It can use data from government and national human rights institutions (NHRIs) reports, and reports by international human rights organizations (e.g., United Nations treaty bodies, the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI)), civil society and academic research. Secondary data analysis is useful for understanding broader trends, validating findings and contextualising advocacy efforts within national or regional policies.

Interviews and focus groups are qualitative methods used to explore people's experiences, opinions and ideas in greater depth. They help uncover the reasons behind certain attitudes or behaviours and give voice to perspectives that numbers alone cannot show. Engaging with Roma women and girls, community representatives and activists helps to better understand their lived experiences, gather personal stories and navigate their needs, interests and perspectives. Particular attention should be paid to diverse groups of Roma women, including Roma women with disabilities, those from rural areas, the elderly, youth or those forcibly displaced, to study their particular needs and vulnerabilities. Interviews and focus groups are particularly effective for generating evidence that brings a human dimension to advocacy and policymaking.

To maintain the focus and coherence of the research, it is good to choose a single, core thematic area. The research should aim to identify barriers, gaps and systemic inequalities, while considering how forms of discrimination based on gender, ethnicity and socio-economic status may intersect and reinforce one another. Understanding how these elements relate to each other will help to uncover the root causes of exclusion to inform comprehensive, evidence-based advocacy that addresses multiple inequalities simultaneously.

To ensure ownership and participation, try to engage in **participatory research**, actively involving Roma women in all phases of the research process. Participatory methods help Roma women to identify priorities and solutions for themselves, as well as improve their skills and capacity to participate in the advocacy work.

Conducting participatory research at ODIHR for and with Roma women

In its 2024 Needs Assessment (unpublished), ODIHR applied a participatory approach, engaging 48 stakeholders through 21 semi-structured interviews and three focus group discussions, and 15 responses to an online survey. This process ensured that the findings and recommendations of the Needs Assessment reflected the voices, experiences and priorities of Roma women themselves, directly informing the structure and content of this handbook.

The assessment looked at the key needs and specific challenges of Roma women's organizations and activists, while also highlighting existing good practices and making recommendations for tailored action and ways forward. It explored three priority aspects, namely the skills, knowledge and organizational capacity of Roma women's organizations; their funding priorities and resources; and their partnerships and alliances.

- **Skills and knowledge.** Understanding existing skills helps to design capacity-building support and ensures that training programmes respond to actual gaps rather than assumptions. According to the Needs Assessment, many Roma women's organizations show strong community engagement, but have limited capacity in strategic advocacy, communication and fundraising, underscoring the need for targeted training and mentorship opportunities.
- **Funding and resources.** Examining gaps in accessing government funds or donor support, and mapping the financial situation feeds into more realistic advocacy plans and sustainable mobilization of resources. The Needs Assessment revealed that one of the key barriers to long-term advocacy is insufficient access to stable

funding, with many Roma women's organizations relying on short-term project grants rather than institutional support.

- **Partnerships.** Analysing the level of collaboration between Roma women's grass-roots organizations and other stakeholders helps to identify opportunities for coalition-building, knowledge exchange and more coordinated advocacy work. As the Needs Assessment shows, while most Roma women's organizations cooperate within their communities, partnerships with government institutions, mainstream women's groups and donor agencies remain limited, pointing to the need for stronger networking platforms.

Community-led intersectional research (Finland, Italy, Romania)

E-Romnja led and contributed to a comparative study on multiple forms of discrimination of Roma women in Finland, Italy and Romania,¹⁹ which documents cases of intersectional discrimination through the testimonies of Roma women.

The methodology applies an intersectional lens in three ways. First, it recognizes that Roma women experience discrimination that is not just ethnic or gender-based, but simultaneous and cumulative. For example, barriers to accessing housing are linked to racial profiling, poverty, single motherhood and local administrative practices that exclude Roma women from legal residency or social housing lists. Therefore, the study does not analyse gender inequality and anti-Roma racism separately, but approaches them as co-existing and mutually reinforcing forms of structural exclusion.

Second, the research explicitly centres the voices of Roma women. Testimonies were collected directly from Roma women through interviews and community discussions. This approach positions the participants as primary knowledge-holders rather than as suppliers of illustrative stories. It also acknowledges forms of discrimination that are often under-reported in official statistics, such as denial of reproductive health care, harassment and humiliation in health facilities, exclusion from formal employment and the pressure on Roma girls to leave school early. By documenting these experiences in the women's own words, the study reveals forms of institutional and everyday discrimination that are often absent from mainstream reporting.

Third, the methodology links evidence collection to advocacy results. The report connects each thematic area — i.e., housing, education, health care, employment

¹⁹ Carmen Gheorghe and Cristina Mocanu, *Challenging intersectionality: Roma women's voices and experiences*, Intersect Voices in Europe, Bucharest, March 2021.

— to the specific obligations of authorities. The findings are formulated in a way that can be used in dialogue with national institutions, equality bodies and international monitoring mechanisms. In this way, data gathered at community level is not just descriptive but is directly prepared as material for influencing policy.

This model illustrates how Roma women's organizations can generate their own data, define their own priorities and use the evidence to advocate for policy change. It also demonstrates that intersectional analysis is most effective when it is produced by, or in direct partnership with Roma women themselves, rather than externally imposed.

1.3 Stakeholder engagement through participatory approaches

Stakeholder engagement encompasses support from key decision-makers and allies, as well as the active participation of Roma women's advocates. It helps build trust, shared ownership and wider recognition of the advocacy goals among those with influence and responsibility, as well as among those directly affected by the policies. This is an important step in ensuring that Roma women's civil society is involved in the design and implementation of programmes and measures that address the needs of their communities, and women and girls in particular.

Steps in stakeholder engagement

Stakeholder mapping identifies the key actors, including government entities, international and donor organizations, gender equality organizations and other civil society allies. When mapping them, define their mandate, role, responsibilities, influence and interests as they relate to your advocacy work. For governmental stakeholders, define their obligations and responsibilities to implement appropriate policies and measures. Identify also the people and organizations that might work against the policy change and your advocacy efforts, whether due to conflicting priorities, institutional constraints or lack of awareness.

Table 1: Potential stakeholders

Stakeholder	Mandate	Responsibility	Role in the advocacy	Capacity-building needs	Engagement
Government institutions	Adopt and implement policies and measures for Roma and gender equality	Develop and enforce laws, allocate resources, implement measures and policies, monitor and assess progress	Key duty-bearers and targets of advocacy; engage to adopt, implement and monitor inclusive policies and measures	Strengthen understanding of intersectionality and Roma women's priorities; enhance participatory consultation skills	Engage through dialogue, consultations, coordination mechanisms and monitoring processes
International and donor organizations	Support human rights initiatives and provide funding	Fund projects, offer technical assistance, build capacity	Support Roma women's advocacy through funding, partnership and visibility	Strengthen understanding of grass-roots realities, intersectional discrimination and inclusive programming	Engage through partnerships, funding, technical cooperation and joint advocacy
International civil society organizations	Support civil society initiatives, provide capacity building, build bridges, networking and collaboration opportunities	Provide resources, capacity and skills development and technical assistance	Facilitate cooperation between Roma-led and mainstream actors, promote inclusion and solidarity	Build knowledge about Roma rights and inclusive advocacy approaches	Engage through networking, joint campaigns, mentoring and exchange platforms
Women's organizations	Promote gender equality and women's rights	Advocate for policies, provide support and raise awareness	Integrate Roma women's concerns into gender equality agenda and advocacy work	Strengthen awareness of intersectional discrimination and Roma women's realities	Engage through joint initiatives, campaigns, solidarity actions and learning exchanges
Human rights and civil society allies	Advocate for human rights and social justice	Support advocacy efforts, provide legal advice and litigation, and raise awareness	Strengthen solidarity, provide technical and legal expertise and amplify advocacy messages	Build awareness of anti-Roma bias and intersectional discrimination	Engage through joint advocacy, coalition work and coordinated campaigns
Opposing groups	Oppose policies that support minority or women's rights	Campaign against Roma rights, spread disinformation	Potential source of resistance and backlash to advocacy efforts	Build awareness among allies on countering disinformation and 'hate speech'	Monitor, document and respond through coordinated communication and counter-narratives

Organizing consultative platforms can help gather perspectives and recommendations from Roma women. To ensure an inclusive approach, these avenues should be conducted in local languages and be accessible to remote and rural communities as well as groups on the move.

Conducting capacity-building activities for Roma human rights defenders — on effective advocacy, networking with stakeholders and allies, and community mobilization — is essential. Intersectionality is an important part of the training and will allow the multiple layers of inequalities lived by Roma women to emerge. These activities should always be tailored to the needs and interests of the participants.

Nurturing participatory and inclusive decision-making processes is important for strengthening Roma women's representation and participation. First, advocates should support the establishment of advisory committees, task forces or working groups led by Roma women to guide advocacy priorities and ensure their needs are directly reflected in institutional and policy agendas. Second, Roma women leaders and advocates should be encouraged to join and welcome human rights, anti-discrimination or gender equality mechanisms to ensure their perspectives are visible and integrated in mainstream decision-making processes.

1.4 Fundraising and mobilizing resources

Organizing fundraising and resource mobilization requires a strategic, inclusive and culturally sensitive approach. To plan and execute advocacy efforts effectively, the goals, objectives and activities must be supported by a realistic estimate of the necessary resources (money and people) and a timeline for delivery. Potential sources of funding should be identified alongside additional resources that could be mobilized through cooperation with others and in-kind support.

Clearly defined goals, objectives and activities will provide a framework for connecting the identified needs with realistic actions and available resources. It allows advocacy initiatives to move from broad intentions to measurable, achievable outcomes. Using participatory consultations and assessments, organizations can translate the identified priorities into specific, time-bound objectives that, in turn, guide activities and fundraising.

Mobilizing resources is an integral part of this process; working out how financial, human and technical resources will be secured, used and monitored. Mapping potential donors, understanding their priorities and aligning proposed activities with their funding mechanisms can improve access to support while preserving ownership of the advocacy agenda.

Funding opportunities

Researching opportunities for funding helps identify diverse and realistic sources of financial, technical and in-kind support that can bring advocacy plans to life. Effective funding research goes beyond listing potential donors; it involves understanding their priorities, funding mechanisms, eligibility criteria and timelines, and then matching them to your organization's vision. A non-exhaustive list of funding opportunities for Roma women's advocacy can be found in [Annexe 1](#).

Many bilateral, European and international donors are increasingly integrating gender equality and Roma inclusion in broader policy frameworks such as the [European Pillar of Social Rights](#)²⁰ and the [Sustainable Development Goals](#).²¹ Funding calls place stronger emphasis on partnership-building and measurable social impact, creating new opportunities for Roma women's organizations to position themselves as strategic actors in advocacy and development.

Crowdfunding platforms

While often underused, crowdfunding can be a powerful and accessible fundraising tool. Unlike traditional donor programmes, crowdfunding allows individuals, activists and small organizations to mobilize support directly from the public, engaging with both local and international audiences. It can help to raise visibility for specific causes, strengthen solidarity networks and attract new allies who may go on to become sustained supporters or partners.

A strong crowdfunding campaign needs to combine a compelling advocacy message, visual storytelling, transparency on how the funds will be used and regular updates to maintain trust and engagement. Platforms such as [GlobalGiving](#), [GoFundMe](#), [Kickstarter](#), [FundAction](#) and [Chuffed.org](#) have hosted numerous initiatives promoting women's employment, leadership and inclusion. Not only can these platforms generate funds but they also raise community awareness and give momentum to advocacy. Practical examples from Roma organizations include campaigns such as [Chiricli Roma Women's Foundation](#), which supports Roma women's empowerment in Ukraine and beyond, and [Ukraine: Help Roma Access Humanitarian Aid](#), a Chuffed.org campaign mobilizing emergency assistance for Roma families displaced by the war. These experiences demonstrate the potential of crowdfunding to amplify Roma organizations and initiatives, connect them with allies around the world and diversify funding sources for advocacy and community work.

²⁰ [European Pillar of Social Rights](#), European Commission, Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion.

²¹ [Sustainable Development Goals](#), UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs website.

Develop a fundraising strategy

Having a fundraising strategy helps an organization make the most effective use of its resources in an organized and planned way, respond to funding opportunities and diversify its funding sources. This exercise should also include a detailed examination of the major challenges in fundraising, including the risks and economic and political factors. It must also consider the organization's strengths and resources and reflect these in the strategy.

Best practices for a strong fundraising strategy:

- **Tailor the fundraising approach to different donors** by responding to calls for proposals with clear and well-structured applications, prepared partnership proposals and creative approaches, such as crowdfunding, to engage the wider public.
- **Diversify funding sources** by combining institutional, bilateral and foundation grants with smaller, community-based or crowdfunding contributions. This reduces dependency on a single donor and increases the organization's flexibility to address emerging advocacy priorities.
- **Align the fundraising goals with advocacy objectives.** Donors increasingly value proposals that demonstrate measurable social impact, gender responsiveness and the inclusion of under-represented voices such as Roma women.
- **Develop membership programmes** to encourage regular contributions from individuals and partner organizations. Clearly communicate the organization's mission, impact and membership benefits, while ensuring transparency and accountability in fund management.
- **Build partnerships and alliances** to strengthen credibility and broaden fundraising reach. Collaborate with academic and research institutions to support proposals with evidence-based data and analysis. Partnering with well-established CSOs, equality networks and groups can add significant value to fundraising initiatives.
- **Plan and link the budget to implementation.** Translate the fundraising goals into a clear and realistic budget, aligned with the advocacy implementation plan. Ensure that financial and in-kind resources are allocated transparently across activities such as administration, expert engagement, meetings, outreach and media.
- **Emphasize transparency and accountability** by clearly explaining how funds will be used, reporting on outcomes and communicating progress to supporters. Trust and openness build lasting partnerships.

- **Invest in communication, visibility and storytelling.** A clear and engaging narrative — supported by human stories that illustrate lived experiences, achievements and community impact — strengthens the fundraising appeal.
- **Explore social enterprise models** to generate sustainable income through selling or providing services or products linked to the advocacy goals (e.g., publications, training courses, crafts or cultural initiatives). These models can strengthen both visibility and financial independence.

What are social enterprises?

Social enterprises combine social causes with entrepreneurial activities, reinvesting profits into community goals rather than private gain. For Roma women's organizations, this approach can build both empowerment and sustainability. For example, the initiative [Roma Women in Action — For Better Future, Back at Home](#) supports Roma women's entrepreneurship and reintegration through business start-ups, while the Council of Europe's [Entrepreneurship of Roma Women — Roma Youth Participation](#) promotes leadership and economic participation among Roma women.

Step 2. Conducting advocacy

This section sets out how to engage stakeholders through participatory approaches, conduct effective outreach and fieldwork, draft policy briefs and create strategic roadmaps. It goes on to explore how to foster dialogue and build coalitions and partnerships with government, civil society and allies. Finally, this section provides guidance on how to use innovative communication and media tools effectively, including digital outreach through social media.

2.1 Implementation plan

Once the advocacy objectives, scope, stakeholders and resources have been defined, the next step is to ensure effective implementation and follow-up. This requires an implementation plan that sets clear milestones, with a realistic and practical timeline, clearly defined activities and assigned responsibilities. The plan should also be modifiable in response to feedback and changing context. The feasibility of the plan will ultimately depend on pragmatic resource planning that reflects both available and projected funding support. Above all, the plan should ensure that the priorities of Roma women guide the advocacy process.

For reference, [Annexe 2](#) includes a sample of an advocacy implementation plan which illustrates a main objective with following activities to guide the implementation process.

Table 2: Advocacy implementation plan — key steps

Step	Practical guidance
Define activities	Identify concrete advocacy actions. E.g., prepare and present policy briefs; organize roundtables with local authorities; hold community consultations; engage with the media to raise awareness of Roma women’s priorities; and/or build coalitions with other women’s and human rights organizations.
Set milestones	Establish progress points. E.g., develop a joint advocacy platform; submit recommendations to parliamentary committees; secure commitments from municipal councils; organize public campaigns around international days (e.g., International Roma Day, International Women’s Day).
Develop a realistic timeline	Align activities with political and policy opportunities, e.g., in relation to budget cycles, elections, development of national strategies on gender equality and Roma inclusion. Allow time for community preparation and follow-up.
Assign responsibilities	Specify who does what. E.g., Roma women’s organizations may lead on community consultations, while partners can provide research support. Assign clear roles within advocacy coalitions or working groups to strengthen accountability.

Step	Practical guidance
Allocate resources	Plan for financial, human and technical needs. E.g., transport costs for community members to get to meetings; translation of materials; small grants for grass-roots initiatives; and staff time for monitoring and reporting.
Budget	Budget for financial and in-kind resources that both the organization and partners are contributing to the advocacy campaign. Develop a budget based on the advocacy implementation plan, considering the number of participants, travel, venue and material costs.
Feedback and adjustment	Integrate mechanisms for feedback. E.g., focus groups with Roma women; regular check-ins with partner organizations. Adapt strategies if certain approaches prove less effective or the context changes.
Centre on the needs of Roma women	Ensure that every step builds on the priorities identified by Roma women — whether related to access to education, employment, health care, housing or combating discrimination — keeping their lived realities at the heart of advocacy work.

2.2 Building advocacy partnerships and networks

The implementation of any advocacy plan relies on strong partnerships and effective networking. Building broad coalitions with like-minded organizations, experts and allies strengthens the credibility and impact of advocacy work. Roma women's organizations may benefit from joining national and international networks and bodies, and from collaborating closely with local civil society actors. Setting clear roles and responsibilities within partnerships ensures accountability and effectiveness. Strategic cooperation with government institutions, international allies, and feminist and human rights advocates amplifies Roma women's priorities and increases the chances of influencing policy change.

Depending on the target and scope of the advocacy work, partnerships could take the following forms:

- **National coordination bodies.** Roma women's organizations can engage at the national level in several ways. They could join existing coordination bodies or mainstream platforms, such as equality councils or national gender equality mechanisms. These bodies provide access to decision-making and visibility, although they are sometimes at risk of tokenism or sidelining Roma women's priorities. Roma women could form their own coordination bodies or task forces centred on Roma women's concerns, ensuring their voices remain central, although such initiatives may struggle with recognition or resources if not well connected. Another approach is for women's and equality organizations to include Roma women in their structures, strengthening solidarity and helping to mainstream Roma priorities, although this requires genuine inclusion.

- **Regional and international networking.** Roma women's organizations can create or join networks and also collaborate with sister organizations or counterparts across borders. This form of cooperation promotes visibility, legitimacy and peer learning, while creating opportunities to engage with European and international bodies. However, participation in these networks requires resources and sustained commitment, and there is a risk that smaller, grass-roots organizations may not be able to remain engaged without external support.
- **Joint advocacy campaigns.** Partnering with mainstream human rights, women's rights and gender equality organizations allows Roma women's organizations to launch joint advocacy campaigns on shared priorities, for example, campaigns against gender-based violence. Such partnerships broaden outreach, maximize resources and position Roma women's concerns within wider advocacy agendas. At the same time, joint efforts need careful planning to ensure that Roma women's priorities remain visible and are not overshadowed by broader advocacy goals.

Do's and don'ts for partnerships

DO:

- Define clear and shared goals, such as advocating for affirmative measures for Roma women in public service employment.
- Establish transparent communication and decision-making procedures, including agreements on budgets, media outreach and representation.
- Be explicit about each partner's contributions — financial, human, technical or in-kind — to ensure fairness and accountability.
- Build partnerships that genuinely reflect the priorities of Roma women, invest in long-term relationships and strengthen partners' capacity to apply an intersectional approach.
- Use joint initiatives to amplify Roma women's visibility and create space for mutual learning and exchange with allies.

DON'T:

- Enter partnerships where Roma women's participation risks being tokenized or sidelined.
- Assume that mainstream agendas automatically address the concerns of Roma women without explicitly integrating them.
- Don't leave communication and decision-making vague, as this can cause misunderstandings or power imbalances.

- Don't overcommit beyond your organization's realistic capacity, nor hide the true extent of available resources.
- Don't overlook intersectionality — advocacy partnerships should address the combined barriers of gender, ethnicity and social status that shape Roma women's realities.

Building strong partnerships with and among Roma women

National coordination body in Bosnia and Herzegovina

- In Bosnia and Herzegovina, a **national network of Roma women's organizations** was formed to coordinate advocacy on gender equality, political participation and the prevention of gender-based violence. Supported by the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina, the network builds Roma women's leadership through initiatives such as the 'Month of Roma Women's Activism', which mobilizes grass-roots groups across the country. It engages directly with state institutions and equality bodies to ensure Roma women's priorities are reflected in public policies and the implementation of the Action Plan for Roma Inclusion.²²

Regional and international networking platforms

- The [Feminist Collective of Romani Gender Experts](#) has built a **transnational network** of Roma feminist scholars and activists **from Spain, Romania, Hungary, Serbia, Bulgaria, Bosnia and Herzegovina and the United Kingdom**. The platform ensures a space where Roma women's knowledge is central, not sidelined and builds advocacy paths that bring Roma women's expertise into policy discussions on their own terms. The network has developed a mentoring system that ensures collective wisdom gets passed on.²³
- The [RTransform project](#) created **political and academic partnerships** between Roma women-led and allied organizations in the **United Kingdom, Hungary, Romania, Spain and Bulgaria**. The initiative focused on embedding Roma women's rights into local governance, municipal strategies and cultural programmes. RTransform combined academic research with grass-roots organizing, resulting in advocacy actions that advanced the representation of Roma women in decision-making and increased the visibility of Roma culture in public life across borders. The project demonstrates how regional collaboration can connect the cultural, academic and political dimensions of Roma women's empowerment.

22 [OSCE Mission to BiH Supports Month of Roma Women's Activism](#), news item, OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina, 8 March 2021.

23 [About the Collective](#), Feminist Collective of Romani Gender Experts website.

Joint advocacy campaigns

- **E-Romnja** (Romania) consistently leads joint advocacy campaigns with Roma and non-Roma feminist networks to advance women's rights and equality. Their initiatives, including *Femeile rome dezvoltă comunități locale* (Roma women develop local communities), promote Roma women's civic participation and access to justice through intersectional approaches. Collaborating with organizations such as FILIA and Romani Phen, E-Romnja challenges institutional racism by combining grass-roots mobilization with national policy advocacy. Its campaigns demonstrate how Roma women's organizations can influence structural reforms on gender equality and anti-discrimination.²⁴
- **Voice of Romni** (Ukraine) joined the international advocacy efforts during the 69th United Nations Commission on the Status of Women by facilitating the participation of Roma women leaders from Ukraine. Working in partnership with Oxfam, CARE, Mercy Corps and the Ukrainian Women's Fund, the organization ensured that Roma women's perspectives on equality, peace and post-war reconstruction were included in global gender-policy discussions. Through these collaborations, Voice of Romni strengthened solidarity between Roma and non-Roma feminist movements, advanced dialogue with donors and institutions, and promoted Roma women's leadership on the international stage.²⁵

2.3 Outreach and fieldwork

Outreach activities and fieldwork mobilize communities while also gathering additional information and collecting human stories that strengthen advocacy efforts. To ensure no one is left behind, such activities should also reach the most vulnerable Roma women and their communities, including those in rural and remote areas, women with disabilities, the elderly and youth, as well as women on the move. Outreach should also build trust, seek diverse perspectives and provide feedback to communities, ensuring that their contributions are valued and reflected in the advocacy process.

Effective outreach and field work includes:

- **Community mobilization.** Train and mobilize Roma women as community leaders and advocates of change within their communities and society at large. Encourage their

²⁴ E-Romnja, *IntersectVoices in Europe — Combating discrimination against Roma women: Challenging intersectionality: Roma women's voices and experiences*, Bucharest, March 2021.

²⁵ See, for example, *International Dialogue Held in New York at the Initiative of the Voice of Romni Team*, Voice of Romni website, 3 April 2025.

leadership to organize local initiatives, consultations and awareness activities. Engage Roma men as allies to support gender equality and promote shared responsibility for advancing the rights of Roma women.

- **Engaging Roma mediators.** Use the networks and potential of Roma mediators, where available. Mediators can strengthen outreach and link communities with local authorities, public institutions and Roma women's and CSOs. In some countries, such as Moldova, most Roma mediators are women, which has proven particularly effective in addressing the specific needs of Roma women and ensuring their voices are reflected in local decision-making.
- **Community dialogue.** Community meetings, awareness campaigns and information sessions should serve as spaces for dialogue and exchange within the outreach process. These discussions enable reflection on shared challenges, identification of priorities and agreement on local actions. Dialogue at this level strengthens trust, fosters participation and ensures that outreach activities respond to the real needs and perspectives of the community.
- **Field visits.** Conduct regular field visits to rural areas and local communities to understand their challenges and gather first-hand data that will inform advocacy planning. Field visits should be carried out in an ethical and respectful manner, ensuring that communities are informed in advance about the purpose, that participation is voluntary and that expectations are clearly explained. Visits should reflect the diversity within Roma communities as well. Respecting privacy, ensuring the confidentiality of shared information and providing feedback on how participants' input will be used can strengthen trust and accountability.
- **Data collection.** Use participatory data collection methods, such as community-led surveys and focus groups, to gather evidence on the needs and priorities of Roma women. When collecting data, make sure participants understand why the information is being gathered and how it will be used. Participation should always be by choice, and personal details must be kept private.²⁶

Engaging Roma mediators in outreach and field work

In **Ukraine**, the position of 'Roma community mediator' is not yet institutionalized, but, since 2011, the Chiricli Roma Women's Foundation has developed a national network of 74 trained mediators, supported by the Council of Europe and other partners. These mediators — many of them women — play an essential role in advocacy,

²⁶ A human rights-based approach to data: Leaving no one behind in the 2030 agenda for sustainable development, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), 2018.

outreach and service delivery, and in bridging gaps between local authorities and Roma communities. During the war, their work has expanded to include humanitarian responses. Mediators have also actively participated in data collection and consultation processes for national policy development. For instance, in August and September 2025, mediators conducted a survey of 530 Roma respondents in the Transcarpathian region for the *Social Atlas of Roma Communities of Transcarpathia*,²⁷ in cooperation with the Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights.

Through these initiatives, Roma women mediators act both as community researchers and human rights advocates, ensuring that local realities inform national and international policy debates. Their engagement during wartime demonstrates the resilience and leadership of Roma women in defending rights, strengthening equality and ensuring that Roma voices remain visible in Ukraine's recovery and governance processes.²⁸

In **Moldova**, the position of community mediator was institutionalized in 2013. Mediators are responsible for facilitating the access of Roma to social protection, education, health care, employment, documentation and other essential services by bridging communication between Roma communities and local authorities. Roma women mediators are particularly engaged in advocating for gender equality and in flagging cases of human rights violations and gender-based violence. The [National Association of Community Mediators](#) and the [Platform of Roma Women ROMNI](#) provide capacity building on human rights, advocacy and public policy to strengthen the skills of mediators.

2.4 Drafting policy briefs

An essential part of advocacy is turning research and community voices into concrete policy proposals. Developing concise and evidence-based policy briefs allows Roma women's organizations to communicate their priorities directly to decision-makers. These briefs transform findings and lived experiences into clear recommendations for change, helping bridge the gap between community realities and policymaking. A well-drafted policy brief

27 This initiative, run by the Chiricli Roman Women's Foundation, maps Roma communities in the Zakarpattia region, providing data on population size, living condition, and key issues, as well as monitoring the human rights situation. The Atlas identifies needs regarding access to medical care, education and employment. The project was launched by the Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights (Ombudsman) in cooperation with the Council of Europe and Chiricli. See the report, [Соціальний Атлас Ромських Громад Закарпаття](#) (Social Atlas of Roma Communities of Transcarpathia), Ombudsman of Ukraine, 23 February 2026, (in Ukrainian).

28 [Досвід внутрішньо переміщених ромів під час війни](#) [Experience of Roma IDPs in Ukraine], Chiricli Roma Women's Foundation, December 2022 (in Ukrainian); [Written Comments Concerning the Republic of Ukraine](#), European Roma Rights Centre and the Chiricli Roma Women's Foundation, 21 January 2010; [Roma Survey in Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine](#), United Nations Development Programme, 2023; Ombudsman of Ukraine, [Соціальний Атлас Ромських Громад Закарпаття](#) (Social Atlas of Roma Communities of Transcarpathia).

can influence legislation, guide programme reforms, support institutional commitments or secure resources for Roma women's rights.

Key steps for developing policy briefs

Define the problem clearly and support it with data and lived experiences. For example, through consultations, an organization learns that many Roma women lack identity documents, which prevents them from accessing health care or the job market. The organization defines its advocacy problem as “Barriers to civil registration for Roma women.”

Map existing policies and commitments by reviewing the policy and legislative frameworks and assessing to what extent these do or do not address the problem, and review their alignment with international standards. For instance, an organization reviews the National Roma Integration Strategy and the gender equality policies and finds no specific provisions for women without identity documents, although both the CEDAW and European Union Roma Strategic Frameworks require such measures.

Analyse the evidence by presenting quantitative data, qualitative findings and community perspectives to show the extent of the problem. Use comparative examples where possible. For instance, field research shows that 35 per cent of Roma women in a surveyed region lack official identification documents, while the national average is below 2 per cent. Testimonies from outreach visits describe how women are turned away from hospitals or employment opportunities for lacking documentation. When analysing the evidence, integrate findings from outreach visits, focus groups and stakeholder meetings to ensure recommendations reflect both community priorities and institutional perspectives.

Formulate realistic policy options by identifying potential policy responses or reforms and briefly analysing their feasibility, cost and expected impact. For example, an organization is considering several options: (a) a national awareness campaign on late registration; (b) mobile registration units; or (c) simplified administrative procedures. After consulting local authorities, it determines that mobile registration units are more realistic in the short term.

Develop clear recommendations by turning evidence into concise, actionable suggestions, which address specific institutions and explain what action is needed and the expected results. For example, recommend that the Interior Ministry pilots mobile civil registration units in three municipalities with large Roma populations; the local councils provide translation and mediation support during registration drives; and the Ombudsperson monitors registration barriers and issues annual progress reports.

Draft the policy brief in accessible language and adapt the tone and visuals to the audience. Keep it concise (2-4 pages) and visually engaging. For instance, an organization produces a four-page brief entitled “Invisible without Papers: Removing Barriers to Civil

Registration for Roma Women.” It includes a summary, charts and quotes from affected women and is shared with the Ministry of Interior, the Ombudsperson and a parliamentary committee hearing.

Disseminate and follow up. Share the policy brief strategically with government bodies, equality institutions, donors and civil society allies. For example, send the brief to the Ministry of Interior, the parliamentary committee on human rights and the Ombudsperson, while also publishing it online and presenting it at roundtables. Follow up through meetings, advocacy visits or public events to encourage the adoption of the recommendations and maintain dialogue with decision-makers.

The structure of a policy brief

The impact of a policy brief depends not only on its content but also on how it is structured. A coherent structure helps the reader follow the reasoning, from defining the issue to understanding the recommended actions and expected outcomes. The table below presents the key sections and what each should include.

Table 3: Key sections of a policy brief

Section	Purpose/what to include
Title and summary	Capture the reader’s attention with a clear, specific title and a short summary of the issue and key recommendations.
Context and problem statement	Explain why the issue matters, who is affected, and the consequences of inaction.
Evidence and analysis	Present relevant data, findings and community perspectives to support the argument.
Policy gaps and implications	Identify shortcomings in existing laws and policies, or commitments and why they fail to address the issue.
Recommendations	Offer 3-5 concrete, realistic actions directed to specific institutions.
Expected results and follow-up	Describe what change these actions will bring and how impact can be measured.
References and contacts	Add credible sources and organizational contact information for collaboration or verification.

Policy Brief: Segregated maternity wards, reproductive rights abuses, and obstetric violence against Romani women

The European Roma Rights Centre produced a [policy brief](#)²⁹ on the patterns of segregation and abuse against Roma women in maternity care in several European countries. The brief describes harmful practices such as placing Roma women in separate wards or 'Roma-only rooms', providing substandard conditions and subjecting them to verbal or physical mistreatment during childbirth.

It frames these abuses as intersectional, because they result from a combination of anti-Roma racism, gender-based discrimination and socio-economic marginalization. The document links these findings to states' obligations and sets out concrete policy demands, including prohibition of segregation in obstetric care, enforcement of informed consent in reproductive health care, collection of disaggregated data in maternal-health settings and independent monitoring of obstetric violence. This brief is a model of how to transform evidence from Roma women's experiences into actionable recommendations.

Other examples of policy briefs

- The Traveller Movement's [Briefing paper on Gypsy, Roma and Traveller women](#)³⁰ sets out key areas of concern for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller women in the United Kingdom, including discrimination in education, employment, health and justice, and calls for targeted public policy responses.
- The [Position paper on the 4th International Roma Women's Conference](#)³¹ consolidates the priorities raised by Roma women participating in this event and formulates demands in areas such as participation, violence against women and access to services.
- The [Policy Brief: Participatory Action Research with Roma Girls](#)³² links early school dropout among Roma girls to structural discrimination, gender norms and poverty, and recommends interventions grounded in community participation and gender equality.

29 [Policy Brief: Segregated Maternity Wards, Reproductive Rights Abuses, and Obstetric Violence Against Romani Women](#), European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC), 23 May 2024.

30 [Briefing paper on Gypsy, Roma and Traveller women](#), Traveller Movement, March 2017.

31 [Position paper on the 4th International Roma Women's Conference](#), European Roma and Travellers Forum and International Roma Women's Network, September 2013.

32 [Policy Brief: Participatory Action Research with Roma Girls](#), University of Alicante researchers and the RoMoMatteR Project team, June 2021.

- *Implementing the principle of intersectionality in the Romanian legislation*³³ outlines the experience of intersectional discrimination faced by Roma women in Romania, analyses the public policies and the national legal framework, and makes policy recommendations.
- The report on *Monitoring the Implementation of the CEDAW and the Istanbul Convention with focus on Roma women and girls*³⁴ documents gaps in protecting Roma women in North Macedonia from gender-based violence and ensuring access to justice. The document formulates recommendations for national authorities and international monitoring bodies.

2.5 Facilitating dialogue and policy engagement

Dialogue and policy engagement transform written recommendations into action. After developing and disseminating policy briefs, Roma and pro-Roma advocates should actively create spaces where decision-makers and community representatives can discuss the proposed measures, exchange perspectives and identify ways forward. This engagement builds trust, strengthens partnerships and increases the likelihood that recommendations translate into tangible change.

All engagement should aim to advance advocacy objectives and foster cooperation. However, the goal of dialogue may differ depending on the stakeholder. For example,

- **Government and public institutions:** to present policy recommendations, encourage institutional commitments and advocate for legislative or programmatic changes.
- **Parliamentarians and local authorities:** to build understanding of Roma women's priorities and promote inclusive policymaking at national and local levels.
- **Equality bodies (NEBs) and NHRIs:** to ensure that Roma women's experiences inform monitoring, reporting and accountability processes.
- **Civil society and allies:** to join forces, share expertise and strengthen collective advocacy for human rights and equality.
- **Donors and international organizations:** to mobilize technical and financial support for advocacy initiatives and strengthen alignment with international frameworks.

³³ Adriana Iordache, Claudia Petrescu and Emanuela Ignăţoiu-Sora, [Implementing the principle of intersectionality in the Romanian legislation](#), Deaconess Foundation, Center for Not-for-profit Law, E-Romnja and Romni, Bucharest, 2022.

³⁴ Roma Women's Rights Network, [Monitoring Report 2025](#).

- **Media and academia:** to raise public awareness, build visibility and generate evidence that supports policy change.

Bringing allies and international partners into these dialogues reinforces cooperation and coherence across advocacy levels. Their engagement helps strengthen Roma women's participation and influence in policy processes and connects local priorities to broader equality and human rights agendas. Involving mainstream equality movements and male allies is equally important, as it promotes shared ownership of gender equality goals and ensures that Roma women's concerns are recognized as integral to national inclusion and policy debates.

Practices by Roma women's organizations in sustaining dialogue and policy engagement

Regional and international policy dialogue. The [Feminist Collective of Romani Gender Experts](#) facilitates structured dialogue between Roma feminist activists and intergovernmental organizations. Through initiatives such as Roma Women in Action, the Collective has engaged with GREVIO and ECRI, providing shadow submissions and organizing online consultations on matters concerning gender-based violence. The Collective's approach demonstrates how Roma women's knowledge and advocacy feed into work of international human rights monitoring mechanisms.

Partnership with NHRIs. The [Chiricli Roma Women's Foundation](#) (Ukraine) collaborated with the Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights in developing the *Social Atlas of Roma Communities of Transcarpathia*.³⁵ This cooperation established an ongoing channel between Roma civil society and the state human rights institution that informs national reporting on Roma women's rights during the war.

Cooperation with governmental institutions. [E-Romnja](#) (Romania) translated advocacy efforts into formal cooperation with state institutions. Following the reports it produced under the [Intersect Voices](#) project, the organization built a relationship with the Ministry of Labour and Social Solidarity and the National Agency for Equal Opportunities. Through workshops and advisory meetings, E-Romnja provided intersectional perspectives for the [2021-2027 National Strategy on Gender Equality](#).³⁶

35 Ombudsman of Ukraine, [Соціальний Атлас Ромських Громад Закарпаття](#) (Social Atlas of Roma Communities of Transcarpathia).

36 [Strategia națională privind promovarea egalității de șanse și de tratament între femei și bărbați și prevenirea și combaterea violenței domestice pentru perioada 2021-2027](#) (National strategy on promoting equal opportunities and treatment between women and men and preventing and combating domestic violence for the period 2021-2027), fonduri structural, 17 October 2024, (in Romanian).

This ensured the representation of Roma women in gender mainstream consultative exercises.

Similarly, the Luludi [Roma Women's Rights Network](#) (North Macedonia) has worked closely with the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and the Ministry of Interior on integrating Roma women's priorities into national action plans for gender equality and Roma inclusion. Using findings from their shadow reports,³⁷ Luludi organized policy-oriented discussions that brought together Roma women, government officials and the international community. This led to a review of the National Strategy for Roma Inclusion (2022–2030), which was amended to include gender-specific measures.

Survivor-led dialogue with government. After years of advocacy, Roma women survivors of forced sterilization — led by Elena Gorolová and with support of allies — engaged in long-term policy discussions with the Czech government. After publishing numerous reports and statements, the survivors' group managed to secure a structured consultation process with the Ministry of Health and the Government Human Rights Commissioner. Regular consultations contributed to the adoption of a compensation law on unlawful sterilization, passed in 2021, marking official acknowledgment and establishing a redress mechanism. The dialogue process illustrates how Roma women's advocacy evolved into institutional accountability.

2.6 Communication plan and media engagement

Communicating about advocacy work is essential for raising awareness, mobilizing support and influencing policy change. It is critical to highlight the potential impact of any policy change. Advocacy communication should use both traditional and new media, with innovative approaches and catchy messages, to reach diverse audiences with short attention spans. To be inclusive, communication needs to bridge the digital divide, via local meetings, radio or community outreach, in order to reach Roma women who may not have access to the Internet or digital devices. All communication and campaign branding should be clear, compelling and understandable.

A well-designed communication plan helps ensure that advocacy messages are consistent, inclusive and effective. It should define how to use traditional and social media, apply storytelling techniques and align the communication activities with the advocacy objectives. Identifying credible spokespeople, such as Roma women leaders, civil society representatives or trusted allies, will enhance the visibility and coherence of messages. Conducting media and communication training builds confidence and strengthens advocates' ability to communicate persuasively and represent their communities in public.

³⁷ Shadow or alternative reports are reports submitted by civil society to UN treaty bodies.

Building good relationships with journalists and media outlets helps ensure accurate and sustained coverage of Roma women's issues. Engaging with media representatives through briefings or workshops can help deconstruct stereotypes and increase sensitivity to challenges such as gender-based violence, early marriage and barriers to education, employment and health care.

Communication and media engagement tools

Effective advocacy relies on using the right communication tools to reach different audiences, from decision-makers and donors to community members and the wider public. The choice of tool depends on the resources available, the message to be conveyed and the target audience. Each platform ('traditional' media and social media platforms) works slightly differently; some will have more influence on policymakers and shape public debate, while others mobilize communities, engage younger audiences and make Roma women's experiences relatable. But the lines are increasingly blurred, so working across multiple channels will help to ensure that advocacy messages are inclusive and visible, and that they resonate across multiple levels of influence.

Depending on available resources, tools can include:

- **Press conferences and media briefings** to present key messages and policy recommendations, or to launch campaigns to journalists and institutional audiences.
- **Social media campaigns** to raise awareness about the specific needs and priorities of Roma women and share stories, infographics and short videos on platforms such as [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [BlueSky](#) or [TikTok](#).
- **Storytelling on digital platforms** highlights the lived experiences and achievements of Roma women, making the messaging more relatable and building empathy and public support.
- **Innovative outreach** methods, such as podcasts and webinars, are good ways to engage with diverse audiences, including young Roma women and girls. Delivering content in the Romani language or using interactive and culturally familiar formats — for example, forum theatre performances that encourage community members to discuss and act out solutions — should be more accessible and help to strengthen community ownership of advocacy messages.
- **Cooperation with influencers and public figures** helps spread the advocacy message, shape public opinion and build a critical mass of endorsement and support.

Communication is an integral part of advocacy, not a separate activity. Sharing evidence-based messages in a creative way ensures that Roma women's priorities are visible, understood and supported by a wide range of audiences. Communication efforts should be planned strategically, coordinated with partners and regularly reviewed to assess reach and impact. A sample communication plan is given in [Annexe 3](#).

Step 3. Reporting on advocacy work

Advocacy reporting is a critical element of any strategic advocacy initiative. It ensures that results are documented, progress is measured and accountability is upheld, both to the communities represented and to partners, donors and policymakers. Reporting is the bridge between action and evidence; it converts advocacy activities into tangible data, narratives and outcomes that demonstrate change. In the context of Roma women's rights, efficient reporting helps to capture the tricky to quantify processes of empowerment, participation and structural transformation that advocacy aims to achieve.

3.1 Documenting advocacy outcomes

Documenting the outcomes of advocacy work requires the systematic recording and analysis of actions and results to determine the extent of their impact. It enables organizations to capture how their initiatives influence change — at individual, community, institutional or policy levels — and to use that evidence for accountability and future planning. Documenting advocacy work in this way ensures it is a measurable process and helps to trace the pathway of influence from local voices to policy outcomes.

Advocacy outcomes can manifest at various levels:

- **For Roma women.** Documentation may record individual examples of empowerment, increased participation in public life or improved access to services and justice.
- **At community level.** It may capture strengthened local networks, the increased visibility of Roma women leaders or enhanced collaboration with authorities.
- **At societal level.** Outcomes might include shifts in public perceptions, stronger media representation or the inclusion of Roma women in mainstream equality dialogue.
- **At policy level.** Advocacy outcomes can be identified in the adoption of equality measures, integration of Roma women's perspectives into national strategies, or allocation of dedicated funding.

Documenting the impact of housing advocacy

The [Federación de Asociaciones Gitanas de Cataluña](#) [Federation of Roma Associations in Catalonia] (FAGIC) (Spain) provides an example of how the systematic documentation of advocacy outcomes can strengthen both visibility and policy influence. The organization implemented a multi-year campaign advocating for equitable housing access and protection against forced evictions affecting Roma families in Barcelona and Tarragona. The campaign focused on ensuring that local housing authorities apply non-discriminatory approaches and include Roma women in municipal decision-making related to social housing.

The FAGIC documented the impact at various levels, from the impact on individuals through to policymaking. Roma women beneficiaries were interviewed to record their experiences before and after the policy change. At community level, the organization documented changes through participatory focus groups. At society level, FAGIC collaborated with local media outlets to assess shifts in the public's perception of Roma housing issues. In terms of policy outcomes, FAGIC's advocacy contributed to the adoption of a new municipal housing inclusion framework in Barcelona, which introduced anti-discrimination guidelines and allocated emergency housing units to Roma families at risk of eviction and homelessness.

Methods of Documentation

Narrative documentation captures the story of the advocacy work; how it unfolded, what strategies were used and what changes were observed. It combines descriptive analysis with reflection, allowing organizations to highlight the progress and contextual challenges. Narrative reports can document, for example, how a Roma women's organization engaged with local authorities to improve access to health care, describing both the advocacy process and resulting outcomes. This method is particularly effective in conveying lessons learned and the human dimension of advocacy work.

Quantitative data collection involves gathering statistical evidence to measure change over time. This can include survey results, administrative data or comparative baseline and follow-up studies. For instance, an organization might track the number of Roma women who secured employment or accessed healthcare services following an advocacy campaign. Quantitative data helps to substantiate advocacy claims, providing measurable indicators that can be used in reports to donors or policymakers.

Qualitative evidence gathering methods focus on understanding the depth and context of change through the voices and experiences of participating Roma women. This covers interviews, collecting testimonials, focus group discussions or developing case studies that reflect the lived realities behind statistical trends. For example, documenting the personal stories of Roma women mediators who influenced local decision-making processes can illustrate empowerment outcomes that numbers alone cannot convey.

Visual documentation complements the written and statistical reporting by offering direct, accessible and emotionally resonant evidence. It can include photographs, short videos, animations and infographics illustrating advocacy activities or results. Visual tools are particularly effective in public awareness campaigns, donor reporting and media engagement, where they can make the advocacy work more relatable and increase outreach.

Together, these methods create a multi-dimensional record of advocacy that captures both evidence and emotion, demonstrating not only what changed, but why it mattered.

3.2 Preparing advocacy reports

An advocacy report records what was achieved and includes the actions that were taken and the outcomes. It serves several purposes: supporting further dialogue with policymakers; creating a pool of evidence that Roma women's organizations can use to continue influencing policy; and reporting back to partners and donors.

A high-quality advocacy report should be more analytical than descriptive. It should assess what worked, what challenges remain and how future strategies can be improved. It should strengthen transparency and credibility by providing verifiable information. Moreover, regular reporting supports institutional learning, enabling Roma women's advocates and allies to refine their approaches, share good practices and influence broader policy processes at national and international levels.

An advocacy report should contain the following:

- **Executive summary.** A concise overview of the advocacy efforts. It outlines the scope and objectives, the key strategies used and the main outcome(s). It should be written so that a policymaker or donor can understand the key message in one page or less. For example, an organization may explain that its advocacy work led to a municipal commitment to recognize Roma women as a priority group in local employment strategies, or to include Roma women mediators in local equality structures.
- **Context and background.** This section explains the issue the advocacy was focused on and describes how the work addressed it. It should link the issue both to the policy gap and to the specific rights that were infringed. For example, in an advocacy report on access to reproductive health care, one might explain patterns of discrimination against Roma women in maternity care and refer to legal anti-discrimination provisions and relevant human rights standards.
- **Activities and engagement.** This section describes all the activities conducted as part of the advocacy process. It details the concrete actions, such as meetings held with officials, roundtables organized with local authorities, public statements issued, participation in consultations, events with the media, capacity-building workshops, community mobilization, or participation at international fora.
- **Impact and outcomes.** This section explains what change was achieved and should include immediate results (e.g., an official statement, a written policy pledge, a task force being created), medium-term results (e.g., a municipality amending its community

strategy to include Roma women's needs), and longer-term changes (e.g., a reduction in evictions or increased access to health services). It should also detail the impact on Roma women as individuals, changes within Roma communities and in society at large, as well as policy changes. Where possible, this section should include numbers, quotes from beneficiaries, extracts from official decisions, or references to adopted policies as supporting evidence.

- **Challenges and lessons learned.** Here the report should describe the main obstacles faced during the advocacy work. For example, limited access to decision-makers, political resistance, underfunding, public hostility or burnout among activists. It should also identify any lessons that can inform future advocacy work. For example, an organization may report that, while public campaigning generated media attention, actual policy changes only happened after closed-door technical meetings with ministry staff.
- **Recommendations.** A vital part of advocacy reporting, these may be addressed to public authorities, service providers, international organizations, donors and pro-Roma allies. Recommendations should be specific, linked directly to the evidence presented in the report and, more importantly, reflect the priorities of Roma women themselves.

Taken together, these elements help to ensure that an advocacy report is much more than an internal record; rather a persuasive instrument for accountability and future influence. A well-prepared report strengthens dialogue with institutions, supports fundraising and documents Roma women's leadership in shaping policy and public debate.

Monitoring and assessing the state of gender equality within National Roma Inclusion Strategies

The [Roma Civil Monitor \(RCM\) initiative](#) is a civil society-led effort that monitors the implementation of National Roma Inclusion Strategies across the European Union. Coordinated by the Central European University and implemented by a consortium of Roma and pro-Roma civil society organizations, the project ran over two cycles (2017-2020 and 2021-2025) with the support of the European Commission. The RCM strengthens the participation of Roma civil society in policy monitoring, promotes evidence-based reporting and ensures that Roma perspectives are reflected in national and European-level assessments.

Within this process, Roma women's organizations have played a key role in ensuring that the gender dimension is integrated into the monitoring and evaluation of national strategies. Among these organizations are [E-Romnja](#) (Romania), [Federación de Asociaciones Gitanas de Cataluña](#) [Federation of Roma Associations in Catalonia] ([FAGIC](#)) (Spain) and the [Roma Women Association of Greece](#), which have all

contributed through data collection, consultation processes and report drafting. Their engagement illustrates the need to include the expertise of Roma women in policy.

Across both cycles of the RCM, gender equality has increasingly been recognized as a cross-cutting priority in assessing the implementation of National Roma Inclusion Strategies. Several country reports formulated gender-specific recommendations that call on governments to strengthen equality mechanisms, collect gender-disaggregated data and improve coordination between National Roma Inclusion Strategies and gender equality policies.

3.3 Ensuring accountability

Accountability is a cornerstone of effective advocacy and democratic governance. In advocacy work, accountability means being transparent about goals, methods and results, to show communities, supporters and policymakers that the work is grounded in evidence and ethical practice. Accountability is needed, because it closes the loop between action and impact. It ensures that the scope and objectives of the advocacy work deliver measurable change, and that Roma communities see the tangible benefits of the efforts carried out in their name. It also protects Roma women's organizations from tokenistic or symbolic inclusion, by creating mechanisms to monitor commitments, track follow-up and demand redress when rights are violated. Accountability also supports learning and sustainability, helping organizations assess what worked, what did not, and how resources were used.

Transparency and accountability mechanisms

Accountability in advocacy work is sustained through transparency, which requires continuous sharing of information, results and decision-making processes with all stakeholders. The most common approaches include annual reporting and public updates, financial transparency, and participatory feedback. Together, these tools promote trust, reinforce credibility and maintain a culture of accountability within organizations and towards Roma communities.

- **Annual reports and public updates** ensure that community members, partners, stakeholders and donors are aware of the organization's achievements, priorities and impact. They typically include descriptions of key projects, advocacy outcomes, lessons learned and future objectives.
- **Financial transparency** includes disclosing information about funding sources, budgets and expenditures that, in turn, promotes financial integrity and public confidence. By

publishing simplified financial statements or summaries in annual reports, organizations demonstrate responsible management of funds. This practice also helps counter stereotypes or the mistrust that is sometimes directed toward minority-led organizations.

- **Feedback channels** guarantee that advocacy remains participatory and responsive to the needs of Roma women. Feedback mechanisms can include in-person consultations, online surveys, community meetings or evaluation sessions, where beneficiaries share their experiences and propose improvements.

Step 4. Sustaining advocacy efforts

This final section focuses on sustaining advocacy through capacity building and continuous engagement. It provides ideas for follow-up actions, such as developing long-term action plans and monitoring progress, and also considers how to take a structured approach to advocacy by institutionalizing it and making it an ongoing integral part of an organization or network's activities.

The advocacy should not be a one-off activity. Some advocacy campaigns are time-bound and require greater engagement in certain phases or during specific policy cycles. For example, some Roma women-led initiatives may focus their advocacy efforts during periods when consultations on National Roma Inclusion Strategies are taking place. However, this work should extend beyond these cycles to ensure lasting influence and continuity.

The effectiveness of advocacy work is contingent upon a structured approach to sustaining that advocacy and ensuring that the work has a meaningful impact on the lives of Roma women, their families and communities. To maintain advocacy efforts, it is essential to focus on continuous monitoring, engagement with stakeholders, long-term outreach activities, political capacity building of advocates and leaders, and dialogue and information sharing with allies, partners and the public.

4.1 Institutionalizing advocacy and developing long-term plans

Lasting change requires continuous commitment. When advocacy work is institutionalized, it entails long-term planning and the integration of practices in an organization's regular activities and ways of operating. Specifically, organizations should:

- **Develop strategic roadmaps.** Define long-term advocacy objectives, key messages and desired outcomes and identify partners and allies to help achieve them. Roadmaps should also align with broader policy frameworks — for example, the [European Union Roma Strategic Framework](#),³⁸ the [European Union Gender Equality Strategy](#),³⁹ the [Council of Europe Recommendation CM/Rec\(2024\)1 on Equality for Roma and Traveller Women and Girls](#)⁴⁰ and national action plans on Roma inclusion and gender equality — to ensure that advocacy remains policy-oriented and builds on existing commitments.
- **Share knowledge.** Document best practices, success stories and lessons learned to create a repository of knowledge for future advocacy work. Share these insights

38 [Commission launches new 10-year plan to support Roma in the EU](#), European Commission press release, 7 October 2020.

39 [Gender equality strategy — Achievements and key areas for action](#), European Commission webpage.

40 [Recommendation CM/Rec\(2024\)1](#) of the Committee of Ministers to member States on equality of Roma and Traveller women and girls, Council of Europe, 5 April 2024.

with broader networks, including regional and international alliances. One example of effective knowledge sharing is the [Roma Feminist Blog](#), led by the Feminist Collective of Romani Gender Experts, which features analysis, reflections and the lived experiences of Roma women to inspire and inform advocacy across Europe.

- **Build a movement.** Focus on creating a broader movement around the cause by engaging with diverse stakeholders and allies, including young people, the media and private sector actors. Strengthening regional and international networks promotes cross-border collaboration and advocacy as well as the exchange of best practices.
- **Plan for sustainability.** Secure long-term funding and resources to sustain advocacy efforts. Explore diverse funding sources, including government grants, donations and partnerships to secure financial sustainability. Further guidance on fundraising strategies and resource mobilization is given in [Section 1.4: fundraising and resource mobilization](#).

4.2 Monitoring, evaluation and learning

Monitoring, evaluation and learning — often referred to collectively as MEL — are central to sustaining effective advocacy. They ensure that efforts remain purposeful, evidence-based and responsive to change. By systematically tracking progress and reflecting on outcomes, Roma women’s organizations and their allies can strengthen accountability, identify what works and adapt strategies to evolving contexts. Beyond measuring success, MEL helps to maintain advocacy momentum, demonstrate results to partners and donors and ensure that lessons learned translate into future action.

Key steps for sustainable and impact-driven advocacy

Establish a MEL framework. Set up a simple system to track progress and measure results. Define clear indicators linked to your goals, such as policy changes, increase in the participation of Roma women in decision-making or stronger cooperation with institutions. Also track outcomes of activities such as awareness-raising, community outreach and training, showing how these efforts lead to new skills, confidence and engagement.

Apply key performance indicators (KPIs). Use performance indicators to assess progress and capture both measurable results, such as the number of new partnerships or adopted policies, and less visible progress, such as improved cooperation, greater confidence or shifts in attitudes towards Roma women. KPIs are simple benchmarks that show whether advocacy work is achieving its intended impact. They can capture both quantifiable results, which measure progress in numbers and concrete outputs, as well as qualitative outcomes, reflecting changes in attitudes, behaviours or relationships.

Integrate learning into practice. View MEL not as separate reporting tasks but as opportunities for collective reflection and continuous improvement. Review findings regularly with teams and stakeholders to identify lessons learned and inform next steps.

Adjust and communicate strategies. Revise advocacy plans to reflect the evidence gathered through MEL. Produce concise progress reports that document achievements, challenges and future strategy. Sharing these reports with stakeholders, allies and communities will strengthen transparency, accountability, trust and ownership.

Link to broader policy and sustainability goals. Ensure that MEL results inform not only internal planning but also external reporting to national and international human rights monitoring frameworks and mechanisms. Particular attention should be paid to national Roma inclusion strategies and national gender equality or anti-discrimination policies, as they provide key benchmarks for measuring systematic progress. Aligning advocacy evidence with these frameworks — alongside European Union law, OSCE human dimension commitments or Council of Europe monitoring processes — reinforces the policy relevance, credibility and sustainability of advocacy work. Monitoring findings can also be used to contribute to international reporting mechanisms, such as shadow reporting under CEDAW.

What is a CEDAW shadow report?

A [shadow report](#) (also called an alternative report) is an independent submission prepared by CSOs for international human rights treaty bodies, such as CEDAW. It provides additional or complementary information to that submitted by a State Party on the implementation of international obligations, in this case, under CEDAW.

For Roma women's organizations, shadow reporting can be a powerful tool for advocacy, monitoring and accountability. It enables them to present evidence on specific forms of discrimination, gaps in policy implementation or the barriers to equality faced by Roma women and girls. Through this process, organizations can ensure that their perspectives and data are visible at the international level.

Shadow reports are reviewed by the CEDAW Committee, which can issue concluding observations, i.e., formal recommendations addressed to governments, calling on them to address shortcomings and improve compliance with their human rights obligations. These recommendations can then be used by Roma women's organizations to advocate further for change at the national level. Roma women's organizations can also submit shadow reports to other United Nations and regional human rights mechanisms, such as the UN Universal Periodic Review or the Council of Europe's monitoring bodies, using these avenues to sustain visibility and accountability for Roma women's rights.

4.3 Sustaining partnerships and collaboration

As partnerships mature, sustaining them becomes essential to maintaining momentum, deepening cooperation and ensuring that advocacy efforts continue to have an impact beyond individual projects or policy cycles. Long-term collaboration enables Roma women's organizations to share knowledge, coordinate actions and amplify their advocacy locally, nationally and internationally. It strengthens resilience, credibility and impact. While [Section 2.2](#) focused on building advocacy partnerships and networks, this section looks at how to keep them strong and purposeful as part of a sustainability strategy.

In order to sustain and enhance partnerships and alliances for long-term impact:

- **Institutionalize cooperation.** Where possible, formalize collaboration through memoranda of understanding, joint implementation or activity plans or via informal agreements that clarify shared goals, responsibilities and expected contributions. Institutionalized cooperation helps to preserve continuity despite staff or funding changes.
- **Engage through advisory and policy mechanisms.** Create advisory committees or task forces with Roma women leaders to guide advocacy strategies and inform policy discussions. Take part in consultations about Roma and gender policy design to ensure that Roma women's priorities are reflected. Maintain dialogue with elected representatives as well as with civil servants in key ministries, whose mandates provide continuity and institutional memory and facilitate long-term partnerships.
- **Maintain communication and accountability.** Keep partnerships active through regular meetings and joint initiatives. Establish feedback channels, i.e., community meetings, online surveys or social media accounts to gather input, refine strategies and respond to emerging challenges. Transparent communication fosters mutual trust and prevents networks and partnerships from becoming inactive after specific campaigns end.
- **Diversify alliances.** Expand collaboration beyond traditional civil society partners to include academia, equality institutions, trade unions, the private sector and the media. Equality platforms and women's rights organizations should also open their structures to Roma women's organizations to ensure their voices and priorities are represented. An intersectional lens helps reveal how multiple inequalities affect Roma women and why their experiences must inform all human rights and gender equality agendas.
- **Strengthen regional and international cooperation.** Sustained engagement with regional and international frameworks supports the long-term visibility and impact of advocacy. Active cooperation within these frameworks also promotes knowledge

exchange, accountability and policy continuity, reinforcing the sustainability of advocacy efforts.

4.4 Knowledge and learning

Advocacy for Roma women's rights is pursued to improve the socio-economic conditions, public and political participation and social inclusion of Roma women, and to combat the intersectional discrimination they face. Therefore, beyond awareness of the policy outlook and the policy agenda, it is equally important for Roma organizations and their allies to be connected to the constituencies in the field. This will enable them to stay up to date with the needs and capabilities of the communities and grass-roots organizations that represent them and to continuously build the capacity of organizations, mediators and activists to respond to their demands and provide input for the advocacy.

- **Maintain active engagement** with grass-roots organizations and communities through regular outreach activities, field visits and community mobilization efforts to ensure that the voices of the most vulnerable Roma women, including those in rural and remote areas, are heard and integrated into advocacy efforts.
- **Conduct regular training sessions** for Roma women's organizations, activists and community mediators to enhance their advocacy, communication and leadership skills. Include advanced workshops on policy analysis, digital advocacy and fundraising to ensure long-term sustainability. These should be integrated in the projects and regular activities of the organizations.
- **Identify and train a new generation of leaders** within Roma communities on topics such as strategic planning, coalition-building and effective communication to ensure the sustainability of advocacy efforts.
- **Establish mentorship programmes** that pair experienced advocates with emerging leaders within Roma communities. This will help transfer knowledge, build confidence and ensure the continuity of advocacy work.
- **Develop tools** to support advocates. These resources should be made available in local languages and be accessible to remote and rural communities.

Conclusion



Conclusion

The *Handbook on Advocating for the Rights of Roma and Sinti Women* marks a significant step forward in strengthening the capacity of Roma women's organizations to influence policies and contribute to systemic change. Over the years, Roma women have made remarkable strides in advocating for their rights, increasing their visibility and securing policy commitments nationally and internationally. However, persistent structural inequalities, under-representation in decision-making and intersectional discrimination continue to impede this progress.

This handbook is as a pioneering effort to equip Roma women with the strategies and tools to navigate these challenges and amplify their advocacy impact. It highlights good practices that celebrate the success, resilience and leadership of Roma women's civil society, recognizing their essential role in advocating for change. Advocacy is a continuous journey, often marked by steps forward as well as setbacks. This publication aims to be both a guide and an inspiration for Roma women's organizations to help them build on every achievement and carry forward the collective Roma women's movement for human rights and gender equality.

At the heart of this handbook is a commitment to leaving no one behind. Advocacy must prioritize the most marginalized voices, including Roma women, who face additional barriers due to statelessness, migration status, disability or socio-economic exclusion. True progress is possible when advocacy efforts centre on the experiences of those most affected by discrimination and ensure their direct participation in shaping policies that impact their lives. By applying an intersectional approach, civil society can challenge the layered inequalities Roma women face and advocate for policies that are truly inclusive and responsive to their needs.

Achieving meaningful change requires collaboration and solidarity beyond traditional advocacy spaces. Engaging with mainstream human rights defenders, gender equality advocates, civil society allies and international organizations strengthens advocacy efforts and broadens impact. Additionally, male allies and decision-makers must be actively involved in promoting gender equality and addressing systemic barriers. This handbook is also intended for Roma women's allies, whose engagement is key to building partnerships, challenging bias and ensuring accountability for equality commitments. Working together — across communities, sectors and movements — creates stronger, more sustainable advocacy efforts that bring Roma women's rights to the forefront of policy agendas.

This handbook is not just a guide, but a joint call to action for Roma women's organizations and their allies to continue the fight for justice, equality and inclusion. It celebrates the achievements of Roma women's work, navigates the challenges, ensures the inclusion of those at a higher risk of marginalization and encourages the building of powerful alliances.

Annexes

Annexe 1: Funding opportunities for Roma women’s advocacy

Funding source	What they offer	Examples
European Union programmes	Large-scale project and programme funding for equality, inclusion, democracy, human rights and social cohesion, largely through open calls.	Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values Programme; European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights; EU Civil Society Facility; Horizon Europe; Creative Europe Programme; European Social Fund Plus
Bilateral donors	Country- or region-specific projects advancing equality, inclusion and governance, often through embassies or development agencies.	Austrian Development Cooperation; MATRA Programme; Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency; Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation; UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office; German Development Agency
International and regional organizations	Grants, technical support, research and capacity building to strengthen Roma inclusion, gender equality and democratic participation.	Council of Europe; European Youth Foundation; International Labour Organization; Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights; UN Women; United Nations Development Programme; United Nations Population Fund; United Nations Democracy Fund; United Nations Children’s Fund; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization; Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights; World Bank; Council of Europe Development Bank
Foundations and philanthropic organizations (public and private)	Flexible project and core funding for advocacy, leadership and institutional support. Public foundations align with policy priorities; private, feminist and philanthropic funds support innovative, intersectional initiatives promoting equality, inclusion and social justice.	Global Fund for Women; Open Society Foundations; TRAG Foundation; Mama Cash; FRIDA - The Young Feminist Fund; Deaconess Foundation; Dalan Fund; ERGO Network; Friedrich Ebert Stiftung; Heinrich Böll Stiftung; Equality Fund; Astraera Lesbian Foundation for Justice; Feminist Review Trust; European Roma Institute for Arts and Culture

Funding source	What they offer	Examples
National and local governments	Grants or subsidies for equality, Roma inclusion and gender-responsive initiatives through ministries or municipal authorities.	European Institute for Gender Equality; National Roma Integration Strategies
Corporate donors	Support for advocacy, inclusion and empowerment initiatives through corporate social responsibility or public-private partnerships. Some corporate foundations also engage in targeted Roma inclusion projects through digital skills, employment or education programmes.	IKEA Foundation; L'Oréal Foundation; Velux Foundations; Telekom Stiftung; European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
Crowdfunding platforms	Enable grass-roots fundraising and community engagement by reaching broad audiences online.	Chuffed.org; GlobalGiving; GoFundMe; Kickstarter; FundAction; Support us

Annexe 2: Sample advocacy implementation

Objective	Advocate for the inclusion of Roma women's needs in national policies and secure long-term funding for women's organizations.
Key activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct a background analysis of relevant national policies and plans, e.g., the National Roma Strategies and the National Gender Action Plans. Examine to what extent these policies made an impact on the lives of Roma women as well the shortcomings in their implementation. This analysis helps to identify remaining gaps and guide future steps. • Organize workshops with selected stakeholders, based on their role, influence and interest, to exchange perspectives, identify shared priorities and agree on concrete advocacy actions. Build and, where possible, formalize partnerships with Roma women's grass-roots organizations, gender and human rights groups and expert organizations. Agree the working terms in the coalition/network, modus operandi, roles and map the resources available. • Organize capacity-building activities for Roma women's organizations, leaders, activists, advocates and their allies on policy analysis and conduct advocacy campaigns. • Draft policy briefs in cooperation with experts and stakeholders while ensuring the expertise existing within the coalition is used effectively. • Generate feasible strategic roadmaps or similar documents to address the different policies while taking into account the initial background analysis. • Disseminate the policy briefs through appropriate channels, such as online platforms, media and public communication, and targeted meetings with decision-makers. • Develop a communication plan that combines digital and community-based methods. Alongside media engagement, social media or storytelling campaigns, include accessible formats such as printed materials, community radio or local events to reach Roma women and communities with limited internet access. • Organize roundtable discussions, advocacy visits and meetings with the decision-makers. Participate in existing working groups on drafting and implementing national policies that address the situation of national minorities, women and Roma. • In cooperation with partners, organize outreach activities to mobilize communities. • Organize a policy-focused conference or discussions gathering decision-makers, Roma women organizations, civil society allies and experts to secure commitment and produce recommendations. • Organize monitoring, evaluation and learning activities.

Annexe 3: Sample communication plan

This sample communication plan illustrates how communication activities can support an advocacy campaign. It is based on an advocacy campaign that aimed to remove the barriers to civil registration for Roma women.

Objective	Key message	Target audience	Tool/channel	Responsible
Raise awareness of documentation barriers faced by Roma women	Every woman deserves recognition and equal access to rights — no one should remain invisible, without documents	General public, media, Roma communities	Press release, social media posts, storytelling videos in Romani language	Communication focal point, media coordinator
Engage policymakers to support policy change on civil registration	Mobile registration units and simplified procedures can help secure documentation for Roma women	Ministry of Interior, parliamentarians, equality bodies	Press conference, dissemination of targeted policy brief, interviews with Roma women leaders	Advocacy team, Roma women spokespeople
Mobilize community participation and feedback	Civil registration brings dignity and access to health care, education and employment opportunities	Roma women and families in rural and remote areas	Community meetings, radio broadcasts, forum theatre performances	Local coordinators, Roma mediators
Strengthen partnerships and the visibility of the campaign	Collaboration between Roma women's organizations, equality bodies and donors ensures lasting policy change	Allies, donors, international organizations, civil society partners	Joint events, newsletters, webinars, donor briefings	Project manager, partnership coordinator

