

ANNUAL REPORT 2020



“We work for a society that accepts diversity, where people are healthy and support one another. Everyone has equal access to quality health services, according to their needs.”

The values of the organization

- The courage to intervene in crisis situations;
- Responsibility towards beneficiaries, partners and resources;
- Activism and civic action;
- Providing trust to beneficiaries and demonstrating empathy towards their problems;
- Persistence in all actions;
- Professionalism in the activities carried out;
- Respect for collaborators and beneficiaries;
- Integrity and honesty;
- Persuasion and perfectionism;
- Working power and efficiency.

SHORT DESCRIPTION OF SASTIPEN

SASTIPEN - The Roma Center for Health Policies, established in 2007, is a nongovernmental organization that promotes social dialogue, participation and community involvement in the decision-making structures regarding the public health policies of Roma and non-Roma citizens and whose areas of interest are: analysis and development of health policies; strategies and interventions of public health, especially in communities with Roma, in order to improve the socio-sanitary situation of the members of this minority; community development of disadvantaged groups in Romania.

The staff of the **SASTIPEN** organization is composed of young Roma and non-Roma activists, with extensive experience in developing and implementing projects / programs addressed to Roma communities, in carrying out analyzes / studies / research that reflect the situation of Roma communities, with experience in implementation and implementation of information and awareness campaigns for members of communities with Roma, with experience in delivering training sessions for adults, in implementing advocacy campaigns, etc.

SASTIPEN considers that in Romania the Roma population faces an aggressive model of social exclusion. Addressing the issue of Roma, in terms of health, must be understood and worked on the effects (high incidence of tuberculosis in the Roma community, number of HIV / AIDS, child malnutrition, lack of access of Roma population at the health services, etc.)

SASTIPEN has as main areas of interest the analysis and development of health policies, as well as strategies and interventions of public health, especially in the communities with Roma, in order to improve the health situation of the members of this minority. At the same time, Sastipen has a special interest in promoting health and changing behaviors, as well as community development of disadvantaged groups in Romania.

SASTIPEN promotes social dialogue, participation and community involvement in the process of making public policy decisions by improving communication between the administrative structures of the authorities and communities at local, national and international level, as well as by notifying the competent bodies when those human rights are violated.

Content:

Foreword.....	2
Activities planned for 2020.....	3
Activities implemented in 2020.....	4-11

Impact of COVID 19 on Roma communities in Romania	12-14
Financial activity in 2020	15
Activities planned for 2021.....	16

Foreword

Dear friends,

The year 2020 was a major challenge for all mankind. After the Spanish Flu of 1918-1920, considered by specialists as one of the greatest human disasters, the COVID 19 is considered by specialists of the WHO as a devastating factor that has vulnerable humanity, influencing global politics, racial relations, family structures and the way of perceiving medicine and religion.

At the beginning of the year we looked at the news and saw the situation in Wuhan-China and we pray that the COVID 19 does not spread in the world, confident that the specialized organizations and institutions that are concerned about the health of the population will find solution to stop this phenomenon. Unfortunately, this did not happen, the virus spread at a dizzying rate and affected the whole world, the large number of infections and the large number of deaths proving that humanity was not prepared for such a situation that requires rapid intervention, both from a medical point of view as well as from a socio-economic point of view.

Sastipen immediately realized that the pandemic would seriously affect members of Roma communities, given that the vast majority of members of Roma communities live in segregated communities and face high levels of poverty. Even if during this period we were forbidden to leave the house, Sastipen team made efforts to identify the difficult situations faced by the Roma in order to bring them to the attention of the competent authorities.

The Romanian authorities were outdone. The lack of the protective equipment, disinfectants and other sanitary materials necessary to protect against COVID 19 in the hospital units, were the most problems that the authorities faced. Among the non-Roma population there were a fantastic fear that provokes intolerance reactions towards certain social groups (homeless, elderly homeless, people with signs of seasonal flu, Roma people living in poor communities, people came from abroad and who do not respect the measures imposed by the competent authorities of quarantine and isolation, persons who do not make incomes and live on the edge of poverty with the minimum support provided by the local authorities). The lack of sanitary protection materials (medicinal spirit, disinfectant for hands, protective masks and protective gloves) as well as the lack of sanitary education in the field of disease prevention was the biggest problem faced the entire population.

Strictly referring to the situation of the Roma, at central level, there were no centralized data to highlight the size of the problems with COVID19 disease. Immediately after installing the emergency situation decreed by the President of Romania, Sastipen contacted the health mediators active in the national network and requested information on how to implement the preventive measures established by the competent authorities.

There were registered cases of Roma people presenting with COVID 19 symptoms and they were immediately registered by the competent health authorities. For example, in the locality of Timisoara, a 15 year old Roma girl, a high school student, presented the symptoms of COVID 19. Immediately the head of the educational unit informed the competent authorities and the girl was tested and the family /

community from which the child came. It was included in the quarantine measures as well as the whole group in the school unit. Unfortunately, the girl was diagnosed with COVID 19, a mild form, and is under treatment. The child's family was tested as well as the school group but fortunately the testing was negative. Then the family members are quarantined as well as the school group. The case was reported by the health mediator from Timisoara. Unfortunately, this case brought to the public attention also the racist speech of the prefect of Timis county who mentioned in a recording carried with the Inspector General School that the virus came from the Roma community from which the girl lived and the poor Roma are virus carriers. Sastipen filed a complaint with the National Council for Combating Discrimination for inciting racial hatred.

In 2020, Sastipen monitors the situation in 12 rural communities and two urban communities. Given the need to provide sanitary protection against COVID 19 infection, Sastipen bought sanitary materials (soap, medicinal spirit, detergent, chlorine-based disinfectant) and distributed in these communities 1500 packages. These sanitary materials are insufficient to ensure prevention for long term. Unfortunately, the financial resources of the organization are limited and in addition, at national level, we also face a problem related to the purchase of sanitary materials. They are not found in commerce and, where they are found, the costs are very high. Sastipen made a written request to pharmaceutical companies that produce such materials but so far we have not received any response.

Sastipen's 2020 activity focused on monitoring the situation of COVID 19 in Roma communities. Within the limits of resources and limited experience, Sastipen managed to put on the agenda of the National Agency for Roma the need for the new strategic vision in the field of Roma inclusion to provide concrete measures to improve Roma access to services and prevent disease. Sastipen's recommendation was taken over by the National Agency for Roma and included in the new strategy proposal and Sastipen will continue the process of communicating with local decision-makers to adopt plans and measures in the field of disease prevention in Roma communities.

Moreover, Sastipen managed in 2020 to maintain its quality of watch dog, monitoring the situation and documenting cases of discrimination that were brought to the attention of the competent bodies.

In conclusion, we would like to thank our beneficiaries, partners and financiers for the trust granted and for the support offered in the process of implementing the activities. We assure you that the Sastipen organization will continue to carry out its activity in accordance with the mission, the assumed values and the assumed strategic vision that has in the foreground the equal access to public health services for all members of the Roma communities in Romania.

SASTIPEN is and will remain a non-governmental organization that promotes social dialogue, participation and community involvement in decision-making structures regarding public health policies of Roma and non-Roma citizens, with the focus on equality of the beneficiaries in health system.

Radu Anuti, president

Activities planned for 2020

Since the founding and until the present time, the organization has dedicated its efforts especially to the issue of:

- Increasing the degree of Roma access to public health services, by developing Community Centers for Medico-Social Assistance, located in the community, for disadvantaged people, excluded from the health insurances system, with an emphasis on the mother and child;
- Advocacy at national level on the health national program initiated by Ministry of Health for Roma communities, in order to be adapted to real particular health needs of Roma vulnerable communities;
- Developing public policies on Roma health, as well as developing public health strategies and interventions, especially in Roma communities, with the purpose of improving the socio-health status of Roma;
- Implementing advocacy activities which would contribute to adopting by the governmental and intergovernmental bodies of coherent policies meant to improve the health status of vulnerable groups' members;
- Organizing integrated community centers;
- Organizing courses to support the national health mediation program;
- Organizing training for health professionals in areas (discrimination and human rights, addressing vulnerable groups, Roma history and culture etc;

For 2020, the main action directions of Sastipen were:

1. Providing technical assistance, monitoring and evaluation of the medical-social services offered at the local level for increasing the access of Roma vulnerable population to quality medical-social services that will lead to the improvement of the national legislative framework and the strengthening the relationship community - local authority - medical-social staff by developing networks of specialist in the field.
2. Continuous training of specialists and community health care teams.
3. Conducting studies and research to assess the quality of medical-social services at the local level in order to raise the awareness of the health problems / risk factors with which the members of the vulnerable communities with the Roma face, by organizing Information – Education - Awareness campaigns that reduce the risk of illness and prevent them.
4. Awareness of the local authorities on the benefits of applying the legislation in the medical-social field and concluding partnerships in the view of strengthening the institutional capacity of the local authorities to improve the situation of the Roma.
5. Advocacy for improving the public policies addressed to roma population in Health area.
6. Advocacy for the effective implementation of the COVID 19 vaccination campaign among members of Roma communities.

Starting from these directions of action, the main objectives pursued and the main activities implemented were:

Objective 1: Strengthening the capacity of the Unit for Technical Assistance, Monitoring and Evaluation (UTAME).

Objective 2: Developing and implementing an Roma health advocacy campaign in order to improve the Romanian legislative framework on the need for public health programs in Roma communities

Objective 3: Developing regional/county/local/community networks composed by experts in medico-social area, who are active in disadvantaged communities, in order to disseminate the lessons learned after the implementation of the medico-social programs, in order to harmonize the policies

Objective 4: Developing the competences of the community medical teams in the context of the health reform

Objective 5: Realizing researches, studies, surveys in order to improve the quality of primary medical services, emergency services, at pre-hospital, hospital and ambulatory services, as well as evaluating the implementation of national programs for public health.

Objective 6: Implementing information, education, awareness campaigns on reproductive health, health risk factors and preventing chronic diseases, awareness campaigns for mothers regarding the health, immunization and understanding the development stages of children, by elaborating a screening program at the level of Roma communities at risk

Objective 7: Providing technical assistance to the local NGOs and authorities in the South-West Oltenia region in order to implement the county action plans in the benefit of the vulnerable Roma communities in 2015-2025.

Objective 8: Providing technical assistance in order to strengthen the institutional capacity of the local authorities by integrating the community teams in social services. (Directorate for Public Health, City Hall Councils, Directorate/Department for Social Assistance, Medical dispensaries / family medical cabinets)

Objective 9: Implementing an Advocacy Campaign for improving the public policies addressed to roma population in Health area– realizing a public policy recommendation in the field of Roma health.

Objective 10: Realization of a new strategic vision of the organization and identification of the partners and the financial resources necessary to implement the activities.

Objective 11: Establishing partnerships with stakeholders and writing financing proposals in accordance with the strategic objectives of the association.

Objective 11: Implementation of a health education campaign in order to reduce the risks associated with COVID 19 and advocacy for the effective implementation of the COVID 19 vaccination campaign among members of Roma communities.

Activities implemented in 2020

Objective 1: Strengthening the capacity of the Unit for Technical Assistance, Monitoring and Evaluation (UTAME).

In the context of COVID 19, the main activities implemented by Sastipen in 2020 were dedicated to strengthening the capacity of the team of the Unit for Technical Assistance, Monitoring and Evaluation (UTAME) in order to support the health mediators in the process of implementing activities in Roma Communities according with the measures disposed by the authorities against COVID 19.

During the reporting period we have implemented the following activities:

Act.1 - Identifying, training, and employing 6 UTAME experts, in order to ensure a permanent collection of information on the functioning of community medical assistance program, providing technical assistance, advocacy, and data collection on the dynamics of the main public health indicators.

Description: The Unit for Technical Assistance, Monitoring, and Evaluation is functional since June 2014 and is subordinated to the National Institute of Public Health, in partnership with SASTIPEN. The main objectives of UATME is to ensure a permanent collection of information on the functioning of community medical assistance program, providing technical assistance, advocacy, and data collection on the dynamics of the main public health indicators. In this respect, in order to ensure the sustainability of this action, Sastipen team has organized two meetings with the coordinator team of UATME within National Public Health Institute to establish the operational procedures for hiring the external experts responsible for ensuring a permanent collection of information on the functioning of community medical assistance program and providing technical assistance. In the end of those meetings the partners have decided to hire 2 external experts paid by Sastipen and 2 internal experts paid by National Public Health Institute, as a part of a new agreement for ensuring the sustainability of UATME activities.

The selection criteria of the two experts hired by Sastipen to ensure the sustainability of UATME focused on previous experience in the health mediation program, experience working with representatives of the Ministry of Health and experts from the National Institute of Public Health and experience in advocacy. The main role of the two experts was to mobilize NIPH experts in the process of collecting data at the local level, making monitoring reports and communicating with the MoH team responsible for managing the community healthcare network. The agreement signed with INSP expired in December 2020 but the partnership will continue because the Ministry of Health will organize a working group in the field of community health care in which NIPH and Sastipen will be actively involved. However, the collaboration agreement will continue in the format managed by the Ministry of Health through the Social Inclusion Unit.

Concrete outcomes:

- 4 meetings organized in the project with the participation of the coordinator team of UATME within National Public Health Institute

- An operational procedure developed for hiring the external experts responsible for ensuring a permanent collection of information on the functioning of community medical assistance program and providing technical assistance

- 2 external experts contracted in the project by Sastipen responsible for ensuring the sustainability of UATME activities.

- A new agreement for ensuring the sustainability of UATME activities signed by Sastipen and National Public Health Institute, for the period of June 2018- December 2020.

Act. 2 - Revising and implementing the system for collecting data on the obstacles encountered in the functioning of the community medical assistance program, in order to identify the deficiencies of the program and to collect the public health indicators.

Description:

Taking into consideration the fact that the MoH has organized an working group for developing the operational procedures for implementing the community medical assistance program without the participation of Sastipen and other important stakeholders within civil society, Sastipen team has developed an working group responsible for realizing the proposals for the implementation of the methodological norms for the implementation of the community assistance program with the focus on health mediators activities.

The proposal prepared by the working group experts was been sent to the MoH in June 2018. In the end of October 2018, MoH has sent an invitation letter to Sastipen in order to involve Sastipen in the working group for developing the operational procedures for implementing the community medical assistance program. Since November 2018, Sastipen has become part of the working group responsible for developing the operational procedures for implementing the community medical assistance program and for developing the system for collecting data provided by community medical assistance program.

Concrete outcomes:

- One working group responsible for realizing the proposals for the implementation of the methodological norms for the implementation of the community assistance program with the focus on health mediator's activities developed by Sastipen.

- A proposal prepared by the working group experts has been sent to the MoH in June 2018 by Sastipen for realizing the proposals for the implementation of the methodological norms

- Sastipen has become part of the working group managed by MoH for realizing the proposals for the implementation of the methodological norms

- Sastipen managed to contribute to the realization of the Methodological Norms regarding the organization, functioning and financing of the community medical assistance activity adopted by the Romanian Government by DECISION no. 324 of May 23, 2019.

Activities implemented in 2020 (2)

Act. 3 - Identifying approaches, methods, and solutions for the identified problems

Description: In the period of March– December 2020, the UATME experts has continued the work in the field of offering the technical assistance to the health mediators for identifying the obstacles encountered in the functioning of the community medical assistance program. The information provided by the UATME experts was considered an important value in the process of realizing the recommendations for MoH related with the methodological norms for the implementation of the community assistance program with the focus on health mediator's activities

Concrete outcomes:

- 2 reports prepared by UATME experts related with the obstacles encountered in the functioning of the community medical assistance program

Act. 4 - Mediating the relation within the community – local authorities – medico-social personnel teams at local level and Realizing quarter reports for the community medical assistance program.

Description: Starting with March 2018, the UATME experts have implemented specific activities in the field of offering technical assistance to the health mediators in the relation with the local authorities and different stakeholders with the main objective to ensure the sustainability of health mediators activities in the benefit of Roma communities. the specific activities have consisted in assistance to the local authorities related with the payment of the salary of health mediators in accord with the new legislation in the field of employment, technical assistance to the health mediators in the partnership relation with the medical staff from local level, empowering health mediators at the local level by organizing local meetings with the participation of the local and county stakeholders.

Concrete outcomes:

- 225 health mediators have received technical support in order to ensure the sustainability of their work
- 225 individual records made by the UATME experts
- 4 quarter reports for the community medical assistance program realized by UATME experts. The monitoring reports highlight both the challenges faced by health mediators and the challenges faced by community members in the process of accessing public health services. An eloquent example that highlights the effectiveness of these reports is the situation at the beginning of 2020 when the Ministry of Health did not allocate enough money to ensure the continuity of the health mediation program. Based on the monitoring process, Sastipen identified this problem and addressed it to the MoH,

succeeding in finding solutions to ensure the payment of the salaries of the employed health mediators and the supplementation with another 50 positions. Another example is the monitoring of the situation of vulnerable communities during the pandemic. The monitoring report made with the support of health mediators supported Sastipen in the process of making recommendations to support members of Roma communities. These monitoring reports support both the health mediation program and the process of making public policy recommendations in the field of health.

- Based on the methodological norms regarding the organization, functioning and financing of the community health care activity adopted by the Romanian Government by DECISION no. 324, Sastipen made a guide for health mediators and local authorities in which the entire methodology of operation of this program was explained.

Objective 2: Developing and implementing an Roma health advocacy campaign in order to improve the Romanian legislative framework on the need for public health programs in Roma communities

In order to implement this objective, during the reporting period we have implemented the following activities:

Act. 5 - Realizing monitoring reports (shadow reports) on how to implement the national health programs.

Description: in the period of Mai – December 2020, Sastipen has continued the follow-up activities implemented in 20219 as part of the coalition of Romanian organizations, coordinated by the Resource Centre for Roma Communities, responsible for preparing the Civil society monitoring report on implementation of the national Roma integration strategy in Romania. Sastipen was responsible for development of health care chapter.

The report was the basis for documentation for the National Agency for Roma and for the National Contact Point for Roma in the process of implementing the new strategy for Roma inclusion for the period 2021-2027.

Act. 6- Organizing debates/public hearing in order to promote non-discrimination in access to health services.

In the context of developing the new strategic vision for roma inclusion 2021-2027, in June 2020, Sastipen managed to organize an on line meeting with the participation of Sastipen Network with the aim to develop a public recommendation in the field of roma health addressed to National Agency for Roma.

NAR received these recommendations and they included these recommendations in the strategic document for roma inclusion for 2021-2027.

Activities implemented in 2020 (3)

Act. 7 - Creating a platform for debate and civic consulting for developing public policies in health.

Description: Since March 2019, Sastipen has become a member of the Roma Sounding Board (RSB), a representative group of civil society organizations with specific expertise in the field of social and economic inclusion of Roma. The main role of the RSB is to identify areas for increased Roma policy attention, to provide Roma perspectives and to propose potential solutions to improve development outcomes and strengthen Roma social inclusion. RSB informs and provides advice on the specific challenges of Roma development for the World Bank's involvement in Romania. Emphasis is placed on significant issues related to addressing these challenges, as well as on contributing to the overall stakeholder dialogue. RSB aims, through its advice and activities, to promote equal rights and socio-economic inclusion of Roma - especially Roma women and girls - and to support the full participation of Roma in the political, social and economic development of their communities. Sastipen is part of the group responsible for Roma Health.

As a member of the Rome Sounding Board, Sastipen has the opportunity to participate in the consultation process with various decision makers invited by the World Bank to the consultation process with civil society. Currently, the World Bank is in the process of communicating with the Ministry of European Funds for the implementation of the financial programming 2021-2027 and planning of the operational programs financed from the Structural Funds. Sastipen proposed the implementation of an operational program dedicated to Roma inclusion where health is a priority. The representatives of the World Bank welcomed this initiative and promised to add this topic to the agenda of discussions with the Ministry of European Funds. In addition, also within this group, Sastipen proposed the inclusion on the agenda of the line ministries of the issue of Roma inclusion in the process of realization and implementation of the national resilience and recovery plan. Roma Sounding Board is a very efficient discussion platform where Sastipen has the opportunity to present its proposals.

Concrete outcome: Gained the status of member of Roma Sounding Board.

Act. 8 - Creating a forum which would highlight problematic law articles and to improve the existing legislation, thus it could be seen the real impact at community level, by proposals for amending/clarifying them, as well as promoting good practices in the area of community medical assistance.

Description: Based on the status of member RSB, Sastipen has initiated discussion with the local partners (Sastipen Network) in order to develop the communication which would highlight problematic law articles and to improve the existing

legislation, thus it could be seen the real impact at community level, by proposals for amending/clarifying them, as well as promoting good practices in the area of community medical assistance. All the proposals discussed with the local partners were presented in the meetings organized by RSB.

The Sastipen network operates as an informal network and is made up of partner organizations at the local level. Currently, the network is made up of 8 NGOs with local activity that Sastipen supports in the communication process with local authorities. Sastipen did not aim to develop a formal network where members would be selected according to certain criteria because it is important to have a relationship of trust based on professionalism and activism for the benefit of vulnerable Roma communities. It is worth mentioning that from November 2019, Sastipen resigned as a member of the Roma Democratic Federation because the objectives of this organization do not converge with the objectives of Sastipen.

Concrete outcome: A public recommendation in the field of Roma Health presented during the meetings organized by RSB. This document is base of public recommendation addressed to the Ministry of Health in the field of Roma Health according with the new strategic vision for 2021-2027.

Act. 9 - Strengthening the cooperation and partnerships between the interested social actors in the process of improving the health status of vulnerable population.

Description: During the project implementation, Sastipen tried to strengthening the cooperation and partnerships between the interested social actors in the process of improving the health status of vulnerable population. In this respect, Sastipen has participated to the meetings organized by Interministerial Commission for Roma Social Inclusion and advocated for partnerships between public institution and Roma NGO's in order to implement programs/project addressed to the Roma Communities. All the activities implemented by Sastipen in this field tried to change the mentality of public institutions about the necessity to work in partnership with local stakeholders based on the realities from the field. The members of Interministerial Commission for Roma Social Inclusion understood the necessity to develop Task Forces in the field of Roma Health by involving different experts from different institutions, like Ministry of Education, Ministry of Labor, National Council Against Discrimination, Ministry of Regional Development and for Housing. In the end of December 2020, at la national level was developed the first Task Force in the field of Roma Housing with the focus on Roma Health.

This working group is coordinated by the National Agency for Roma and the National Contact Point for Roma within the Ministry of European Funds. Currently this working group is

Activities implemented in 2020 (4)

under construction, the National Agency for Roma has issued an establishment order and requested the line ministries to appoint members. Sastipen is part of the group as an association working in the field of health and social inclusion.

Concrete outcome: the first Task Force in the field of Roma Housing with the focus on Roma Health was developed.

Act. 10 - Creating a system for decoding the legislation in the public health area, reported to the level of understanding, at the level of the community teams and local authorities.

Description: Sastipen managed to contribute to the realization of the Methodological Norms regarding the organization, functioning and financing of the community medical assistance activity adopted by the Romanian Government by DECISION no. 324 of May 23, 2019. Based on the methodological norms regarding the organization, functioning and financing of the community health care activity adopted by the Romanian Government by DECISION no. 324 of May 23, 2019, Sastipen made a guide for health mediators and local authorities in which the entire methodology of operation of this program was explained.

Concrete outcomes: Sastipen made a guide for health mediators and local authorities in which the entire methodology of operation of this program was explained.

Objective 3: Developing the competences of the community medical teams in the context of the health reform

Act. 12 - Creating the Center for Training and Certifying of the Community Medical Nurse by reformulating the Center for Training and Certifying of Health Mediators.

Description: Starting with March 2020, Sastipen has started the process of creating an on line Center for Training and Certifying of Health Mediators. Taking into consideration the expertise of Sastipen in the field of health mediators training, based on the results of the meetings organized with the participation of the NTPH, Sastipen has decided to develop the association as a Center for Training and Certifying of Health Mediators. Between July - November 2018, Sastipen has implemented specific activities for accrediting the association as a Center for Training and Certifying of Health Mediators.

Concrete outcomes: Sastipen has become a Center for Training and Certifying the Health Mediators, which organizes online courses.

Act. 15 - Organizing continuous professional training courses.

Description: Considering the pandemic situation in Romania, Sastipen failed to implement actions for continuous training of health mediators. on the one hand, we did not have the finan-

cial resources to organize continuous training courses and on the other hand, the measures taken by the Romanian authorities did not allow the organization of events. Instead, aware of the need to provide training to mediators in the field of prevention of COVID 19, Sastipen monitored the situation of health mediators during the emergency and we asked the Ministry of Health to train health mediators in the field of prevention of COVID 19. Between May and July 2020, at the level of the county public health directorates, training sessions for health mediators in the field of COVID 19 prevention were organized.

Objective 4: Providing technical assistance to the local NGOs and authorities in the South-West Oltenia region in order to implement the county action plans in the benefit of the vulnerable Roma communities in 2015-2025.

Act. 16 - Providing technical assistance for organizing work groups responsible with implementing the county action plans in the benefit of vulnerable Roma communities for 2015-2025.

Description: In the period of 2015-2017, in partnership with local NGO's from Oltenia area, Sastipen has succeeded to developed 4 action plans adopted by County Councils from Dolj, Gorj, Ilt and Mehedinti. With this approach, Sastipen has succeeded to change the paradigm of implementing policies in social inclusion domain with the participation of County Council. Taking into consideration this new approach, during January - December 2020, Sastipen has continued to provide technical assistance to the local roma NGO's at the local level for organizing work groups responsible with implementing the county action plans in the benefit of vulnerable Roma communities for 2015-2025.

Concrete outcomes The local NGOs has received support in the process of identifying material / financial resources needed to implement a humanitarian aid campaign addressed to Roma communities during the COVID 19 emergency period.

Act. 17 - Implementing a training program for the members of work groups regarding the intervention of integrated actions in order to fulfill the measures foreseen in the county action plans in the benefit of vulnerable Roma communities for 2015-2025

Description: In the period of 15-18 February 2019, Sastipen has implemented a training program for the members of work groups regarding the intervention of integrated actions in order to fulfill the measures foreseen in the county action plans in the benefit of vulnerable Roma communities for 2015-2025 from Oltenia area. Based on this training, in April 2020, the representatives of the county councils from Oltenia Area have sent a letter to the Ministry of European Funds to ask the financial resources needed for implementing the actions plans.

Activities implemented in 2020 (5)

The Ministry of European Funds has responded positively at this request. Between February 2019- February 2020, Sastipen has supported County Councils from Oltenia area to develop project proposals for EEA and Norway Grants.

Concrete outcomes:

- A training program for the members of work groups and local NGO's implemented by Sastipen team
- A letter to the Ministry of European Funds sent by the County Councils for asking the financial resources needed for implementing action plans.
- 4 project proposals were submitted to EEA and Norway Grants and 2 received a positive answer (Gorj and Dolj).

Act. 18 - Strengthening the monitoring capacity of the Roma civil society at local level, by participation to realizing monitoring reports on the results registered and realizing recommendations on improving the implementation of measures foreseen in the county action plans.

Description: Between March 16 and June 15, 2020, Sastipen worked very closely with representatives of the National Agency for Roma and Roma NGO's (Sastipen network) and conducted an analysis to provide a perspective on the dimension and need for rapid intervention by national authorities to prevent the mass illness of Roma people. Based on this information, Sastipen made an address to the Prime Minister of Romania requesting the implementation of a national emergency program addressed to vulnerable communities. Sastipen mentioned in the document that the intervention must aim to ensure access to social services and benefits, including the guaranteed minimum income as a decent income, for social groups that include Roma people from isolated, poor communities and who are most severely affected by the effects of the current crisis. In the same time, in accordance with the provisions announced by the competent authorities, Sastipen mentioned the fact that there is a need to strengthen the capacity of the social assistance system in all localities of the country, to provide social services to the elderly, children, people with disabilities, people in residential and care centers, and to ensure in good conditions the payment of benefits and social benefits to citizens. Unfortunately, the Romanian authorities did not respond to the Sastipen proposal, but the National Agency for Roma received an information letter from the Romanian Government assuring that the Roma population will equally benefit from the programs and interventions implemented by the authorities in order to prevent COVID 19.

Concrete outcomes:

By involving Roma Civil society from the local level in the process of collecting data, Sastipen has succeeded to strengthen the monitoring capacity and role of the Roma civil society at

local level.

At the county level, in all 4 counties, the local partners sent letters to the decision makers asking the emergency intervention in Roma communities. In the same time, the local partners monitored the interventions addressed to the vulnerable population ensuring that the Roma population will receive the same services and support.

Objective 5: Realizing researches, studies, surveys in order to improve the quality of primary medical services, emergency services, at pre-hospital, hospital and ambulatory services, as well as evaluating the implementation of national programs for public health

In order to implement this objective, during the reporting period we have implemented the following activities:

Act. 20- Realizing a methodology and tools for collecting data.

Description: This activity was planned for implementation in the second stage of the project. Unfortunately, due to the pandemic situation, Sastipen failed to develop the working methodology for data collection in order to monitor the access of Roma to national programs in the field of health. However, given the organization's fears about reducing Roma access to health services during the state of emergency declared by national authorities in the context of COVID 19, Sastipen maintained permanent contact with doctors participating in the scholarship program in order to identify situations or medical protocols restricting the right of Roma patients to receive medical treatment in hospital units.

Concrete outcome: As a result of this activity, Sastipen addressed the National Council for Combating Discrimination requesting an instruction addressed to the County Public Health Directorates and the Ministry of Health to warn about respecting the principles of human rights and equal opportunities for Roma patients.

Act. 21- Involving and training the Sastothan network (students/graduates of the Roma Leadership in Health Program) in the researches, studies, surveys realized by Sastipen.

The network is still in the development phase. Even if there are a number of 32 former scholarship holders in the database, we keep permanent contact with 12 of them. The vast majority mention that they do not have enough time to allocate to this project. Given this situation, Sastipen will continue to identify resources so as to hire staff to ensure communication with former students and to develop an online platform to ensure communication with former and current scholarship holders.

Activities implemented in 2020 (6)

Description: Starting with March 2020, in the context of the Romanian health crisis caused by COVID 19, Sastipen maintained permanent contact with the doctors and nurses' beneficiaries of the medical scholarship program for Roma.

Concrete outcome: creating an informal network for identifying the work protocols used at the level of medical units.

In this activity we were interested in communicating with former students, current doctors or nurses, to identify what are the practices at the hospital or medical unit in relation to Roma patients in the context of COVID 19. We were particularly interested in whether Roma are treated differently in the doctor-patient relationship, if they are denied access to medical units and if patients' relatives have access to visits in the same way as other patients. It should be mentioned that in the context of COVID 19, the protocol prohibiting access to medical units was applied to all citizens regardless of ethnicity. The most difficult situations were in cases where some of the Roma patients died and their relatives asked to remove the body from the hospital without respecting the medical protocol imposed by law. Sastipen identified these situations through direct communication with former fellows, who now are working in the public health system.

Act. 22- Realizing a database with Roma students who would be encouraged, trained, and involved in research activities.

Description: In the context of COVID-19, the network of doctors and nurses benefiting from the medical scholarship program is an advantage both for members of Roma communities accessing health services and for Sastipen in the process of monitoring compliance with human rights principles in health. During the reported period, Sastipen maintained permanent contact with Roma professionals and initiated discussions with the Roma Education Fund in order to identify solutions to continue the scholarship program for Roma medical students.

In this activity, the main objective was to link a database with former fellows, current doctors or nurses with whom we can work / communicate and identify the problems faced by the Roma population when accessing public health services. We also carried out this activity with the help of REF Romania, with which Sastipen has a very good communication and partnership relationship. Currently, Sastipen collaborates with REF Romania in order to offer support to medical scholarship students in the process of carrying out additional activities in accordance with the scholarship contract.

Objective 6: Providing technical assistance in order to strengthen the institutional capacity of the local authorities by integrating the community teams in social services. (Directorate for Public Health, City Hall Councils, Directorate/

Department for Social Assistance, Medical dispensaries / family medical cabinets)

Act. 25 - Collecting data on the health status and satisfaction level of the community members regarding the implementation of the national programs for public health. This activity was done without consulting the social responsibility trainers in Macedonia (Zoran Bikovski or Borjan Pavlovski). The Sastipen team relied only on their own experience. We have no knowledge of the existence of a team of social responsibility trainers in Macedonia.

Description: During September - December 2018, Sastipen team has developed the tools for collecting data on the health status and satisfaction level of the community members regarding the implementation of the national programs for public health. The pilot methodology was implemented in 12 localities.

Concrete outcomes:

-Tools for collecting data on the health status and satisfaction level of the community members regarding the implementation of the national programs for public health developed by Sastipen team.

-A report of the pilot research project on the health status and satisfaction level realized by Sastipen.

Act. 27 -Support in the process of implementing the community medical assistance program, adapted to the community needs and based on the collected data.

Description: As we mention above, Between November 2010 – March 2019, Sastipen managed to contribute to the realization of the Methodological Norms regarding the organization, functioning and financing of the community medical assistance activity adopted by the Romanian Government by DECISION no. 324 of May 23, 2019. Based on the methodological norms regarding the organization, functioning and financing of the community health care activity adopted by the Romanian Government by DECISION no. 324 of May 23, 2019, Sastipen made a guide for health mediators and local authorities in which the entire methodology of operation of this program was explained and in the same time has adapted the training curricula for the health mediators. Considering Sastipen's experience in the field of health mediation and community integrated service centers, during the project, Sastipen provided technical assistance to local authorities in the process of developing integrated service centers to provide services in accordance with the needs of local communities.

Concrete outcomes: 3 community centers were developed at community level with the support of Sastipen.

Activities implemented in 2020 (7)

Act. 28- Unitary implementation of the health calendar at the level of community teams for collecting the specific data.

Description: Between January 2019 and February 2020, at the level of the 8 functional community centers developed by Sastipen, health education campaigns were simultaneously implemented for members of Roma communities. During the reporting period, health education campaigns were implemented at community level with the following topics: vaccination of children, maternal and child health, reproductive health, reduction of pregnancies among minors, chronic diseases, patient rights and access to public health services. Concrete outcomes: Sastipen followed the results of the implementation of the campaigns and their impact among community members.

Act. 29 -Mediating the relation between the methodological coordinator (PHD) and the administrative coordinators (local authority) in order have a coherent planning and monitoring of the community medical assistance activity.

Description: The activity of Mediating the relation between the methodological coordinator (PHD) and the administrative coordinators (local authority) in order have a coherent planning and monitoring of the community medical assistance activity it was permanent. Taking into consideration the role of Sastipen in the Ministerial Commission for Roma within Ministry of Health and the role as technical assistance provider for health mediators, during the project implementation process, Sastipen has succeeded to ensure the communication between the responsible actors from national level and local level with the focus of respecting the legislation in the field of health mediation by the local employers.

Concrete outcomes: 2 annual monitoring reports provided to the Ministry of Health

Unfortunately, the Ministry of Health did not send a written feedback to our organization. The discussions with the head of the MoH community health care program showed that the Sastipen reports are able to highlight the problems facing the system and the proposals contribute

Objective 7: Developing regional/county/local/community networks composed by experts in medico-social area, who are active in disadvantaged communities, in order to disseminate the lessons learned after the implementation of the medico-social programs, in order to harmonize the national policies

Act. 30- Elaborating a methodology for evaluating the medico-social programs implemented by the community teams in the intervention areas of Sastipen.

Description: During 2010-2020, Sastipen has developed 42 community centers with the focus of providing medical services to the vulnerable population. Base on this experience, in 2018 Sastipen has become a partner of Ministry of Labor and Social Justice in the process of developing the concept of community center for vulnerable population which will be developed in 139 local communities with the support of Ministry of European Funds. Taking into consideration the necessity to multiply the experience of Sastipen in 139 localities, between January – March 2020, Sastipen has developed the methodology for evaluating the medico-social programs implemented by the community teams. The methodology for evaluating the medico-social programs was implemented in 4 localities (Slatina, Baia de Fier, Bicaz and Puscasi). During the period of June – December 2020, Sastipen implemented the methodology for evaluating the medico-social programs and the lesson learned were discussed with the representative of Ministry of Labor and Social Justice.

Concrete outcomes: a methodology for evaluating the medico-social programs implemented by the community teams developed by Sastipen team.

Objective 8: Implementing information, education, awareness campaigns on reproductive health, health risk factors and preventing chronic diseases, awareness campaigns for mothers regarding the health, immunization and understanding the development stages of children, by elaborating a screening program at the level of Roma communities at risk.

Act. 35- Signing partnerships with the Mother and Child Protection Institute, and providers of private medical services/ individual medical offices of general practitioners in the communities at risk.

Description: Since November 2020, Sastipen has become the partner of Mother and Child Protection Institute in a multiannual project with the aim to implement two important health campaigns in the field of uterine cervical cancer and colorectal cancer. The project was approved by the donor (European Structural Funds) in November 2020 and its started the implementation in December 2020.

Concrete outcome: Sastipen has become the partner of Mother and Child Protection Institute in a multiannual project with the aim to implement two important health campaigns in the field of uterine cervical cancer and colorectal cancer.

The project is very important for the members of the vulnerable communities in the South East region and can be the basis in the planning process of the future national programs implemented from the national budget and where Sastipen can be a reliable partner.

Other important results achieved in 2020

As a result of the implementation of strategic vision, Sastipen has managed in 2020 to keep its "watch-dog" capacity on the implementation of public policies for the Roma in the health field. Having in mind the objectives proposed in our strategic vision for 2020, Sastipen has succeeded to achieve very good results such as:

- Based on new agreement for ensuring the sustainability of UATME, Sastipen has succeeded to ensure a permanent collection of information on the functioning of community medical assistance program, providing technical assistance, advocacy, and data collection on the dynamics of the main public health indicators.
- Sastipen has succeeded to continue the work implemented by the working group managed by MoH responsible for developing the operational procedures for implementing the community medical assistance program and for developing the system for collecting data provided by community medical assistance program.
- Sastipen has continued to provide technical support to the health mediators and in the same time to advocate for sustainability of this activity in the benefit of Roma communities.
- Sastipen has continued to be a key player at the national level responsible for developing public recommendation in health in the benefit of Roma population.
- Sastipen has continued to be a key partner at the local level responsible for developing public recommendations addressed to the County Councils about the necessity to include health as a priority in the county/local action plans addressed to the Roma social inclusion
- Sastipen succeeded to continue the training process for health mediators becoming a Center for Training and Certifying the Health Mediators.
- Sastipen has succeeded to continue the technical assistance work for local NGO's to become a real partner for local authorities in the process of implementing initiatives in the benefit of Roma communities, especially in the health area.
- Sastipen has succeeded to continue the process of developing the research area in the field of Roma Health by developing tools for collecting data on the health status and satisfaction level of the community members regarding the implementation of the national programs for public health.
- Sastipen has succeeded to develop a new public recommendation in the field of Roma health and transmitting it to NAR and the Ministry of Health.
- Sastipen has succeeded to establish new partnership with NGO's for developing new proposal related with the aim of the organization;
- Sastipen has succeeded to write new financing proposals based on the mission of the organization.
- Sastipen has participated to different working meetings, conferences and seminars for the exchange of experience with other institutions and organizations working in the field of Roma inclusion.
- Sastipen has Increasing the degree of Roma access to public health services, by developing Community Centers for Medico-Social Assistance, located in the community, for disadvantaged people, excluded from the health insurances system, with an emphasis on the mother and child;
- Sastipen has succeeded to advocate at national level on the health national program initiated by Ministry of Health for Roma communities, in order to be adapted to real particular health needs of Roma vulnerable communities;
- Another success of Sastipen during the implementation of the project is the fact that the team has strengthened, reanalyzed its strategic vision and adapted it to new health challenges, attracted financial resources from European grants (they were made 4 projects that were funded with implementation from November 2020 to November 2023 and 2 projects are in the evaluation process), became increasingly visible in public space and strengthened its partnerships at local and national level.
- Aware of the magnitude of the pandemic situation and taking into account the high degree of vulnerability of members of compact communities with Roma, especially in rural areas, between March 16 and June 15, 2020, Sastipen worked very closely with representatives of the National Agency for Roma and Roma NGO's (Sastipen network) and conducted an analysis to provide a perspective on the dimension and need for rapid intervention by national authorities to prevent the mass illness of Roma people. As we mention above, according to the address received from the National Agency for Roma, we find that the Romanian Government did not carry out a special program addressed to vulnerable Roma communities but included in the national intervention program the vulnerable population from Roma communities that benefited equally. the extent of the benefits provided by the competent authorities. However, the monitoring carried out by Sastipen found that Roma communities are still excluded from the self-help programs implemented by the competent authorities. Sastipen continued to monitor the situation of the communities in which it operates and took all steps to ensure that the Roma benefit equally from the programs implemented by local authorities in the field of COVID prevention 19. Being an issue that will continue to affect Roma communities, Sastipen will continue to monitor the situation and support the need for emergency intervention in these vulnerable communities.
- In the context of the Covid-19 pandemic situation, Sastipen has managed to be active in the process of monitoring the situation in Roma communities and to be a very active partner in the relation with National Agency for Roma in the process of identifying the critical situation and proposing the solutions

For the next period, Sastipen will continue to follow the strategy and to implement activities, trying to become more active in the advocacy process for changing the mentality of the decision makers relates with the necessity of improving the Roma population health status.

Impact of COVID 19 on Roma communities in Romania

The issue of COVID-19 affected the entire population of Romania, regardless of social status or ethnicity. The issue of COVID-19 affected the entire population of Romania, regardless of social status or ethnicity. The people most at risk of infestation were people diagnosed with chronic diseases, the elderly population, poor people within rural communities at risk of social exclusion, people living in compact communities where social distancing measure imposed by the authorities cannot be implemented due to living conditions, people who do not have access to a water source that allows the care of personal hygiene and living spaces, people without health education in the field of disease prevention, people who have traveled abroad and have not complied with the isolation or quarantine regime. Unfortunately, a large part of the Roma population in Romania falls into these categories of people at risk of COVID 19 infestation.

The people most at risk of infestation were people diagnosed with chronic diseases, the elderly population, poor people within rural communities at risk of social exclusion, people living in compact communities where social distancing measure imposed by the authorities cannot be implemented due to living conditions, people who do not have access to a water source that allows the care of personal hygiene and living spaces, people without health education in the field of disease prevention, people who have traveled abroad and have not complied with the isolation or quarantine regime. Unfortunately, a large part of the Roma population in Romania falls into these categories of people at risk of COVID 19 infestation.

Since the adoption of the presidential decree establishing the state of emergency and the Military Ordinance no.1 / 16.03.2020, Sastipen has treated with maximum seriousness the activity of identifying the special situations faced by members of Roma communities, constantly communicating with health mediators active at local level, with the Roma experts from the County Offices for Roma and other relevant actors, requesting information on the situation at the community level in order to inform in real time the relevant local / county authorities, in order to prevent the spread of COVID 19 virus and to prevent certain conflict situations that may affect peaceful coexistence between citizens at the local level. In addition, Sastipen monitored articles, posts, hate speech, bringing them to the attention of the National Council for Combating Discrimination, an institution that have the duty to sanction racist discourses and help to prevent racial hatred or interethnic conflict.

For example, in the locality of Timisoara, a 15-year-old Roma girl, a high school student, presented the symptoms of COVID 19. Immediately the head of the educational unit informed the competent authorities and the girl was tested and the family / community from which the child came. It was included in the quarantine measures as well as the whole group in the school unit. Unfortunately, the girl was diagnosed with COVID 19, a mild form, and is under treatment. The child's family was tested as well as the school group but fortunately the testing was negative. Then the family members are quarantined as well as the school group. The case was reported by the health mediator from Timisoara. Unfortunately, this case brought to the public attention also the racist speech of the prefect of Timis county who mentioned in a recording carried with the Inspector General

School that the virus came from the Roma community from which the girl lived and the poor Roma are virus carriers. Sastipen filed a complaint with the National Council for Combating Discrimination for inciting racial hatred.

The COVID 19 pandemic affected all marginalized Roma communities in Romania. From the analysis carried out by Sastipen with the support of the National Agency for Roma, the most affected are members of Roma communities in compact communities, especially from rural area, who do not have access to water sources, who face a high degree of poverty and who are under the jurisdiction of local authorities who do not have sufficient financial resources to cover basic needs in emergency situations.

The biggest problem facing most of the Roma communities in which Sastipen works in terms of prevention against COVID 19 is the lack of access to a source of water and sanitary materials. In rural localities, where the Roma population lives compactly in a community isolated from the rest of the population, the danger of COVID 19 infection is very high. Sastipen made addresses to the local authorities and to the county departments for emergency situations in order to provide the population with the necessary water for drinking, necessary for both washing and daily consumption. But the situation is still deficient because, at the Sastipen call, the authorities mobilized and temporarily provided the water supply (fire brigade brought water tanks to the community providing people with water for consumption for about 1 week). Further this situation should be monitored and frequent calls made to the authorities to continue the process of water supply to the community. The Sastipen team has maintain the contact with community leaders and workers and sends requests to APL frequently. It is certain that in the future, in these communities, the number one priority is the water supply of the communities in the public network.

Based on the experience of the 12 rural communities that Sastipen has monitored during the emergency situation, it was found that another problem is the indifference of the people regarding the application of the preventive measures. They do not take into account the risks associated with this pandemic. But this indifference is also due to the fact that people do not have the financial resources to allow their daily life, the vast majority are beneficiaries of social assistance and they are workers without legal forms. In the context in which, the presidential decree prohibits leaving the house, Roma without income, no longer have the capacity to find work and are unable to buy food. Faced with this problem, Sastipen called on the local authorities in these communities to speed up the conduct of social investigations in order to give them the possibility of these people to receive support from the authorities, thus preventing possible crimes that can be committed by the Roma in the process of get food. In these moments of crisis, the priority and concern of the Roma is about how they can get their food. Aware of this situation, the Sastipen team made an address to the Red Cross and other humanitarian organizations through which it requested support for members of these communities.

Aware of the magnitude of the pandemic situation and taking into account the high degree of vulnerability of members of compact

Impact of COVID 19 on Roma communities in Romania (2)

communities with Roma, especially in rural areas, between March 16 and June 15, 2020, Sastipen worked very closely with representatives of the National Agency for Roma and conducted an analysis to provide a perspective on the dimension and need for rapid intervention by national authorities to prevent the mass illness of Roma people.

According to our analysis, during this period the priority issues of the Roma communities in Romania are analyzed from three perspectives, respectively:

1. From the point of view of health and prevention COVID 19 - lack of sanitary materials to ensure the protection of members of Roma communities (protective mask, gloves, disinfectant and solutions for disinfecting living spaces), reduced access to medical services of members of Roma communities Roma, especially the chronically ill and the elderly (people at risk of COVID infection 19), lack of financial resources to cover expenditure on medicines, lack of protective equipment for health mediators and nurses, front-line staff in the process of communicating with community members in this crisis situation, the lack of health education for the majority of the vulnerable population in the field of COVID 19 prevention. Health mediators, community nurses and other human resources acting at community level and who are the main actors in the process of education to prevent the spread of the virus COVID 19 is in very high danger and, without proper protective equipment, acts as an agent for the spread of the virus among the vulnerable population. Regarding this issue, the Sastipen informed the Ministry of Health and requested the emergency endowment of these human resources with adequate protective equipment. In addition, given the protection measures in place by the competent health authorities, many Roma communities are not connected to a water source that provides them with minimum hygiene measures, both personal and residential.

2. From a social point of view and social distancing, most Roma face the lack of financial resources needed for daily food. Local authorities and humanitarian organizations do not have the capacity to respond to these needs and for this reason there are hostile reactions from members of Roma communities. In rural areas, the vast majority of Roma were engaged in subsistence agriculture, unskilled labor without legal forms, day laborers. Another vulnerable group is the Roma people who practice the traditional crafts of the Roma. In the context of social distancing, they are unable to exercise their activity becoming inactive and vulnerable, without the possibility to benefit from social protection programs offered by the competent authorities (social assistance, emergency aid, etc.). In the context of the emergency, they are unable to earn an income and without any support, they must find sources of funding that will allow them to live on a daily basis. Given the social segregation provisions imposed by the competent authorities, some members of Roma communities do not comply with this provision because, on the one hand, they do not have the possibility of social distance (in compact communities the number of Roma living in the same house exceeds the number of people regulated by military ordinances), and on the other hand, in some communities, a large number of Roma came from abroad and do not respect isolation or quarantine. Through their unconsciousness, they represent a real danger for the whole community (see the case of Țândărei - Ialomița, where the Roma did not comply with the isolation regime and became the main culprits, in public opinion, for the spread of the virus throughout the locality).

3. From the perspective of equal opportunities and non-discrimination, Roma are currently in an extreme situation, especially

from the perspective of the risk of racial hatred fueled by the media and the online environment. During this period, Sastipen submitted a number of complaints to the National Council for Combating Discrimination, but the online environment continues to promote defamatory articles and posts that contribute to creating a negative image of Roma, especially those returning from abroad, considered as the main culprits for the spread of the virus in Romania. Moreover, in certain situations, local authorities that ensure the implementation of measures found in military ordinances (local police, national police, gendarmes), commit abuses against Roma, unjustifiably sanctioning, in some cases, with very large fines, using unjustified force in the relationship with community members and creating a state of panic among members of the Roma community. There is certainly a need to send a message from the Romanian Government to discourage these discriminatory attitudes, which undermine human dignity

Based on this information, Sastipen made an address to the Prime Minister of Romania requesting the implementation of a national emergency program addressed to vulnerable communities identified with the support of the National Agency for Roma.

In this address Sastipen requested the intervention as follows:

- Acquisition and distribution by local authorities of sanitary protection materials against COVID 19 among the vulnerable population in Roma communities;
- Mapping, monitoring and ensuring the access of vulnerable people (elderly, people with chronic diseases) to public health services;
- Organizing an education campaign for the prevention of COVID 19 among the Roma population, adapted to the cultural / traditional specifics of Roma communities.
- For compact Roma communities that do not have access to a source of running / drinking water, the development of the local infrastructure of the running water network will also benefit members of Roma communities.
- Emergency aid in the form of free medicines and other necessary medical services for people infected with all types of viruses during this period.
- Rapid intervention in order to place mobile hygiene stations in areas where people do not have water in the house.
- Urgent intervention to remove waste from the immediate vicinity of homes.
- Training of health mediators and community nurses on the measures ordered by the competent authorities in the field of COVID 19 prevention, equipping them with protective equipment, monitoring their health.
- Completion of Governmental Decision 43/2020, for the approval of support measures settled from European funds, art.8 (1), including community health mediators and community nurses, as staff directly involved in the process of preventing the spread of COVID 19 in the communities with Roma.
- Development of a support program for Roma children in primary and secondary education, especially in poor communities, to help ensure the continuity of educational activities.
- Development of an emotional support program for vulnerable people in Roma communities, especially for people in isolation / quarantine.

Impact of COVID 19 on Roma communities in Romania (3)

In the field of social and social distancing, the priority national program must take into account:

- Development of a support program for members of vulnerable communities to provide daily food during emergencies.
- Simplification of the procedures for applying Governmental Decision no. 30 / 18.03.2020 on the establishment of measures in the field of social protection, ensuring the access of vulnerable persons to social assistance benefits that were not previously needed: social assistance, heating aid, family support allowance, monthly food allowance, rent allowance and others.
- Development of a support program for Roma children in primary and secondary education, especially in poor communities, to help ensure the continuity of educational activities.
- Development of an emotional support program for vulnerable people in Roma communities, especially for people in isolation / quarantine.
- Development of a support program necessary for Roma people from communities affected by natural disasters (floods, landslides, etc.) in order to relocate in decent conditions and their care.

Sastipen mentioned in the document that the intervention must aim to ensure access to social services and benefits, including the guaranteed minimum income as a decent income, for social groups that include Roma people from isolated, poor communities and who are most severely affected by the effects of the current crisis.

In the same time, in accordance with the provisions announced by the competent authorities, Sastipen mentioned the fact that there is a need to strengthen the capacity of the social assistance system in all localities of the country, to provide social services to the elderly, children, people with disabilities, people in residential and care centers, and to ensure in good conditions the payment of benefits and social benefits to citizens.

Unfortunately, the Romanian authorities did not respond to the Sastipen proposal, but the National Agency for Roma received an information letter from the Romanian Government assuring that the Roma population will equally benefit from the programs and interventions implemented by the authorities in order to prevent COVID 19.

Furthermore, given the magnitude of the phenomenon of the spread of the virus, Sastipen continued to identify partners in order to ensure the process of monitoring the situation at the level of Roma communities. In this sense, as a member of the Roma Sounding Board, Sastipen was actively involved with World Bank experts in the process of collecting data at the local level in order to know in due course the size of the COVID 19 issue in Roma communities.

The analysis shows that the Romanian authorities did not take into account the need to send messages in Romani language. This aspect affects the process of information, education and communication with members of traditional Roma-speaking Romani language. Due to this situation, in many of the traditional communities with Roma there were outbreaks of infection that determined the authorities to

isolate the community and declare the locality in quarantine (see case of Tandarei-Ialomita, Craciunesti-Mures, Brahasesti-Galati, Bar-bulesti-Ialomita, where all Roma citizens speak Romani).

The crisis we are facing is unprecedented and imposes exceptional measures, especially in Roma communities where the poverty rate and income inequality have always been very high in Romania. In order to counter the deepening of poverty, as well as social and economic inequalities, special measures are needed to support those most affected by this multiple crisis.

Given this situation, it is important to identify all situations at local / community level and to intervene promptly, while planning the new strategy for Roma for the period 2021-2027. The new strategic approach must focus on the specific needs of individuals in the strategic context adopted by the Romanian Government and should include two types of interventions / directions of action, respectively:

1. directions for joint action at national level, such as the provision of infrastructure at Community level (water supply, electricity, roads), the provision of housing for persons who have to ensure the principle of social distance, the provision of welfare through social programs (jobs, social services), access to health, access to education, culture and non-discrimination.

2. specific directions for action at local level. Here, the intervention of local authorities in the strategic planning process is very important. Based on the specific needs of the Roma, local authorities can develop action plans that will be the basis for attracting the financial resources needed for their implementation. Given the lessons learned in the context of COVID prevention 19, the role of local authorities is very important in the process of improving the situation of the Roma.

County	No. Vulnerable communities	No. Roma People	No. people with chronic diseases / at risk of infection	No. people in isolation	No. quarantined persons	No. people over 65
Alba	47	14309	1765	519	119	1325
Arad	63	6363	56	0	1	21
Arges	8	7413	889	86	6	760
Bacau	19	10859	1303	68	7	1040
Bihor	7	33697	1785	0	0	3210
Bistrita-Nasaud	24	6350	432	133	0	55
Botosani	14	15670	1087	114	70	1340
Brasov	30	15171	1417	266	20	1578
Braila	13	8.553	932	262	17	1.023
Buzau	28	35.000	6200	1356	4	5700
Calarasi	18	20706	2482	1045	484	3004
Caras-Severin	24	6866	532	0	0	180
Cluj	8	4913	354	2	0	40
Constanta	14	17230	2239	853	267	3479
Covasna	52	18351	2365	610	27	3654
Dambovita	6	12416	1738	384	67	2601
Dolj	10	12760	1658	854	32	3445
Galati	13	15449	2471	811	267	1521
Giurgiu	6	3479	343	122	0	321
Gorj	7	14860	1783	54	5	2349
Harghita	45	14792	1472	105	6	2451
Hunedoara	32	6646	543	21	0	476
Ialomita	2	2350	239	326	0	146
Iasi	18	16820	1876	1893	977	2356
Ilfov	13	9795	1021	50	0	2352
Maramures	15	3022	378	0	0	88
Mehedinti	9	10.049	2762	170	33	832
Mures	22	11582	1376	87	0	1654
Neamt	8	5965	346	70	2	854
Olt	15	17.659	2381	530	22	1.632
Prahova	18	24520	2543	5032	281	3213
Salaj	8	5689	232	18	0	310
Satu Mare	6	4892	332	27	0	168
Sibiu	4	4268	367	164	34	1032
Suceava	10	12234	1274	1560	45	3210
Teleorman	12	6.569	762	568	2	553
Timis	8	5649	576	148	0	165
Tulcea	4	880	46	0	0	35
Valcea	6	8530	542	265	12	785
Vaslui	14	9793	876	229	0	328
Vrancea	6	9161	952	62	0	1123
Bucuresti	4	12853	762	130	0	854
Total	690	449133	53489	18994	2807	61263

FINANCIAL ACTIVITY FOR 2020

Revenue and expenses are recorded at 31.12.2020

Source of income - Activities without patrimonial purpose	Value- RON
Resources from the state budget	0
Grant funds	906.797,00
Revenue from donations	0
Other operating revenues	28.670,00
Total	935.467,00 (223.795,93 USD)

Expenditure category	Valoare - RON
Salaries	689.319,00
Expenses with employees	0
Insurance, social protection and other taxes and payments assimilated to salaries	15.468,00
Services provided by third parties	27.640,00
Travel expenses	58.371,00
Advertisement and publicity	59.484,00
Expenditure on inventory materials and objects	30.048,00
Depreciation and provisions	25.169,00
Other operating expenses	22.273,00
Total	927.772,00 (221.955,02 USD)

The expenses for all transactions were accurately recorded in the accounting system of the association and of the projects in progress, the expenses are supported by appropriate evidence and documents (invoices, minutes of receipt, reports, payment orders, account statements, entry notes, vouchers, statements of wages, punctures, receipts, payment and collection orders, etc.).

The association keeps the accounting records of the projects separate from its accounting, and at the end of each accounting month it integrates the project balances in the institution's accounting, using distinct analytics for projects identified by the project code, so that the activities carried out within the projects are easily identifiable in the total activity of the association.

During the year 2020, the association had 26 employees, of whom 8 were employed full-time for an indefinite period and 18 persons were employed with a short-term.

Each of the funds we receive means a special responsibility for us. We know that anyone who grants a grant, makes a donation, redirects 2% or sponsors, wants their amounts to be reflected in real profits for the community, for the beneficiaries. Within the SASTIPEN Association we make every effort to bring this money to a greater value and to produce a lasting positive change.

For donations or 2% redirection please use the account

RO74RZBR0000060009878802 Raiffesen Bank.

The main directions of action of Sastipen in the period 2020-2024

Taking into consideration the previous experience of Sastipen and the new challenges at national level given both the situation of COVID 19 and the new strategy for Roma inclusion developed by the Romanian Government for the period 2021-2027, in the next period our organization will focus on the following directions action:

- Strengthening the network of health mediators and improving the legal framework regulating the rules for the operation of the community health mediation program, funded by the Ministry of Health and administered through local government.
- Developing local health care services delivered to vulnerable community members based on the principle of integrated approach and focused on the needs of the individual (community medical and social assistance centers).
- Preventing and combating discrimination cases and promoting the principles of non-discrimination in health among staff of health facilities and among vulnerable Roma communities' members - including monitoring the process of implementation of anti-discrimination measures in the field of health ordered by national legislation.
- Conducting researches, studies, surveys to identify the problems faced by vulnerable populations in the process of accessing the health services provided by the state, including health indicators, Covid 19 and the access of Roma population to national preventive and curative health services and programs.
- Developing and implementing advocacy campaigns at local and national level, to contribute to the development of public policies for the benefit of vulnerable communities, with a focus on improving the health of vulnerable population Roma
- Training for medical practitioners and other human resources active in the benefit of Roma communities (health mediators, medical community nurses, NGO workers, facilitators and community workers) in the field of advocacy and non-discrimination.
- Development and implementation of health education campaigns in Roma communities, with a focus on the prevention of communicable diseases, including COVID 19.
- Advocacy for developing the infrastructure at the local level and the programs addressed to the Roma communities according with the measures disposed by the romanian authorities in the context of Covid 19.
- Providing technical assistance to the local NGOs (Sastipen network) in order to become a real partner for local authorities in the context of new strategy for Roma inclusion 2021-2027.
- Developing a monitoring system to monitor the satisfaction of the beneficiaries regarding the services received and to lead to the improvement of the quality standards offered by the health service providers at community level.

Considering the negative impact of COVID 19 in the poor Roma communities in Romania, in the next period Sastipen will develop a fundraising program necessary to purchase sanitary materials for body hygiene and living space hygiene that will be distributed in Roma communities, materials required for protection against COVID 19.

Maintains daily communication with stakeholders on communication and social media channels (e-groups, Facebook, Instagram, Youtube, etc.).

Produces press releases and distributes media and other communication channels.

Participates in national / regional / local radio and TV shows and promotes Sastipen activity.

Moreover, in order to advocate for equitable health service provision and to strengthening the watchdog capacity, Sastipen will develop partnership relations with different stakeholders (NGO's, networks, academics, inter-governmental bodies, etc) both form national and international level.



ROMA CENTER FOR HEALTH POLICIES

40 Triunghiului Street
Sector 5, Bucharest
Postal Cod 051113
Phone: 0214560321
Fax: 021450321

Email: office@sastipen.ro
www.sastipen.ro

The Board memners

Av.Andrei Vasilescu

Turcu Dorel

Georgiana Neacsu

Executive staff

Radu Anuti Andrei—President

Dr. Eugenia Bratu - VicePresident

Dr. Georgel Radulescu—UATME

Dana Samuila—Financial Manager

Geanina Radulescu—Program coordinator

Danut Dumitru coordonator program

Adrian Simion—Financial Manager

Silvia Paiu—Program assistant

Mihai Oancea—Program assistant

Ana Lazarescu—Program assistant

Andreea Moscovici—Program Assistant

Andreea Chiriac—Program assistant

Madalina Paraluta—Program assistant