

→ Raising Roma working opportunities

Country Turkey

Project title Municipal service delivery to raise Roma working opportunities

Twinning Municipality of Deventer (the Netherlands)

Municipality of Edirne (Turkey)

Project period 1 September 2006 to 30 September 2007

Project budget € 36,669

Project objective

Raise the employability and employment of the Roma population of Edirne in small scale projects such as waste collection and processing, housing, traditional handicrafts, etc.

Project summary

The municipality of Deventer assisted Edirne in developing a municipal plan for Edirne's Roma population by developing small scale employment projects in areas such as waste collection, housing, and traditional handicrafts. The plan led to improved contacts between the municipality and the Roma population and to plans for improved access of the Roma population to regular work and income.

Core information

Edirne is a town of 120,000 inhabitants and has a specific demographic structure as some 25,000 of its inhabitants are Roma people. The region depends on agricultural activities and agro-processing industry. Edirne also has over 600 ancient Ottoman-Turk historical sites and the town is known for its annual wrestling festival. The municipality of Edirne is responsible for serving citizens to meet their demands, especially in the fields of infrastructure, social and public services.

Problem analysis

In general, Edirne's Roma people live in poor conditions. They have a low status and a low level of education and income. There is a lack of expertise and quality of services delivered to the Roma people. This project aimed to improve the co-operation between the municipality and the Roma community to reduce unemployment, to improve the image of the municipality among deprived groups, and to assist in the integration of Roma into society in general.

A practice to improve service delivery of local governments

Project implementation

First of all desk research was undertaken in Edirne, resulting in the drafting of an input document. A seminar for involved parties was then organized and the input paper was discussed. A SWOT analysis was carried out and several small-scale work opportunities were explored. The Dutch team visited Edirne to assist in establishing a local project team and to contribute to the choice of opportunities to be tested. These included waste, traditional handicrafts, social housing and organizing co-operatives. The municipality of Edirne instituted regular meetings with representatives of the Roma population, inviting them also to the activities organized within the project. The president of EDROM (Roma association) became a project team member. The action plan and structure of working opportunities for the Roma in Edirne are in preparation.

Process management

The project required a strong policy and organizational change to set up an action plan to meet the demands of the Roma people. A Roma Association and a Federation of 14 Roma Associations all over Turkey (EDROM) were the main stakeholders involved in the process.

Recommendations: do's and don'ts

- Involve related stakeholders such as NGOs in the preparation and implementation of the action plan;
- Ensure municipal council support for the action plan to ensure project sustainability;
- Regularly meet with Roma representatives.