



The Salvation Army

EU AFFAIRS OFFICE



MAPPING

THE SALVATION ARMY'S WORK WITH ROMA ACROSS EUROPE



AUGUST 2017

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Forewords by Major Mike Stannett, MEP Soraya Post and Major Kathryn Blowers	5
Introduction	8
• Where we work	9
Challenges to Roma inclusion	10
What Role for The Salvation Army ?	11
• Key elements of how The Salvation Army is effectively addressing these challenges	12
• What Roma say	13
Testimonies and reflective essays	14
Country Reports	20
• Belgium	21
• The Czech Republic	22
• Hungary	23
• Italy	24
• Moldova	24
• The Netherlands	25
• Norway	26
• Romania	28
• Slovakia	30
• Sweden	32
• Switzerland	33
• UK	35
Recommendations to the EU	36



FOREWORDS

Major Mike Stannett,

Officer for EU Affairs



The vicious cycle of poverty and hopelessness is perfectly illustrated in the plight and conditions that many of the Roma peoples of Europe have to face. The enlargement of the EU has revealed to us the hidden levels of poverty and racism on a scale that was unimagined: whole communities of people living in conditions that would not be tolerated by non-Roma in their own

countries. With shockingly low standards of housing, poor amenities, poor education, poor health care and poor job prospects, Roma have faced social exclusion on a massive scale. Now moving into Western and Northern Europe, Roma are barely tolerated and in some cases have been completely rejected as they, as is within their rights, move around the EU to build a better life for themselves and their families.

The Salvation Army has been working with Roma people for the past 25 years, in their home communities and also as they try to settle into new countries. We work together with Roma communities, municipal authorities and other civil organisations and to ensure a coordinated approach to our work with Roma across Europe, The Salvation Army has recently initiated a Roma Mission Network.

The Salvation Army is trying to develop services and actions to empower Roma, help improve life, engender hope and widen prospects for the future. This includes after-school activities to help children with their education in Hungary, prevention of homelessness and maintenance of tenancies in the Czech Republic, integration programmes in the UK and Norway, employment training and job creation in Romania, day centres in Slovakia and much more.

In this report we share with you our work and ministry with various Roma communities throughout Europe. The programmes are run as either part of The Salvation Army's local corps (church) activities or as part of The Salvation Army's professional social services. What is perhaps unique is that often The Salvation Army remains with a community for generations. This develops trust, integration, consistency and continuity in our work.

The Salvation Army believes that God created us all equal; equal and deserving of life with dignity, justice and fairness. The Salvation Army is enriched as Roma people join us and together we are working on making this a reality.

Soraya Post,

Member of European Parliament



Soraya Post is a Member of the European Parliament for the Feminist Initiative party of Sweden. She is herself a Roma and has been a human rights activist for many decades.

Working on human rights in the European Parliament, one comes across many heart-breaking cases where these unalienable rights have been violated around the world. We deal with human beings of course - be they brave or hopeless - who are being denied their rights. But very often we never meet them. Instead, their stories are conveyed to us in the form of numbers. However numbers fail to adequately explain the fate of those falling victims to human rights violations. Mostly, numbers distance us from the reality, the desperation and the fighting spirit of the very people whose stories these figures claim to portray. But then, at times putting a number on the misery that many people face can help us grasp the magnitude.

This winter the Fundamental Rights Agency of the European Union finalised a report called EU Midis on the situation of Europe's largest minority - the Roma. While democracy and the respect for human rights has spread over Europe during the last decades and lifted many millions out of poverty and freed them from dictatorship the situation for this continent's largest minority has not improved. For the Roma, their dire plight has rather worsened.

Some 80 percent of Roma surveyed in the FRA report live below their country's at-risk-of-poverty threshold; 50 percent of Roma children do not attend school. But one number that stuck with me is this: one third of Roma children risk going to bed hungry when they go to sleep tonight. Perhaps it stuck with me because I know many Roma children, perhaps because I used to be a Roma child myself, or perhaps because my own kids and grandchildren and their friends are part of these statistics. Every third child. One, two, three. I can put names on them. I can see their faces when I close my eyes.

These numbers tell us a story of poverty. But the problem is not really that the Roma are poor. The reason every third Roma child risks going to bed hungry tonight is that they have been deprived of their rights. Poverty is the symptom

of grown-ups being denied to work and children being denied education. It is not the Roma who are keeping themselves from becoming rich. It is majority society that is keeping the Roma in poverty, through prejudice, policing and pity. The Roma do not need majority society to pity them. They need majority society to face up to the thousand years old anti-Gypsyism that it is still reproducing and extend the same rights to Roma that the rest of European citizens take for granted.

It is comfortable to describe the “Roma problem” as a matter of integration, a social issue. That puts at least part of the responsibility with the Roma themselves. When in fact their situation in today’s Europe is the result of a long tradition of hostile anti-Gypsyism. When I deal with human rights abuses in Azerbaijan, Iran, Guatemala or the Philippines, I know there is an element of hypocrisy in the European approach. We like to reprimand others for not respecting fundamental rights, but our largest minority at home lives in despair because they are treated as second class citizens. This is not to say that poverty among Roma is not a problem. It is in fact the most visible trace of this social exclusion that Europe has condemned the Roma to for such a long time.

I am confident that many of you reading this report have done something to help. Please carry on, it is much needed. Please, also try to remember that you should not help out of pity, but out of solidarity. Not because the Roma cannot help themselves, but because society has denied them their rights and thereby the ability to help themselves. Do not commit the same mistakes. Work not only for the Roma, but with them. Involve them in all processes and let them decide for themselves what they need and what their goals are.

Roma participation in the political process is abysmal. There are only two Roma Members of the European Parliament, whereof I am one. There are more than eight million of us in the European Union. Remember that political participation starts at the grass roots level, in the poor Roma communities where NGOs are trying to do some good. Do not only feed the poor Roma, teach them how to fish. Empower people at the bottom and they will be able to strive for the top themselves.

To all those of you who are trying to make the world a better place - thank you! Without you the world would be a much darker place. And together we can make a real change.

The best of luck to you!

Major Kathryn Blowers, Chair of The Salvation Army Roma Mission Network



In recent years we have seen the growth of many different expressions of The Salvation Army’s ministry among Roma. This is exciting and moving as we see how God is leading and using this ministry among this people group. In response to this, The Salvation Army has initiated a European Roma Mission Network, which aims to bring together best practice and shared learning.

Four main working groups form this network and they are exploring the following areas, which were identified as fundamental in recent conferences. These are: Integrated Social Actions, Roma Leadership Development, Advocacy and Bridge Building. Drawing on experience and expertise within these areas, we aim to promote and support best practice to advance the ministry among Roma and identify where this may also be used to help and advance other avenues of Salvation Army ministry.

These are amazing opportunities that God has opened up for The Salvation Army and we are ready to be inspired and challenged, as we see first-hand how God has transformed the lives of these new Roma believers and how that transformation speaks into our own lives. As we minister together with and among the Roma, we are all blessed and enriched.



INTRODUCTION



INTRODUCTION



This report attempts to map the work of The Salvation Army with Roma in Europe, detailing the work carried out in 12 countries where we are particularly active with the Roma population. The Salvation Army works with Roma through both the provision of social services and through engaging Roma in church community life. In many cases, as you will see in the country reports, the two are integrated but one is not a prerequisite for the other (The Salvation Army clearly states in its mission statement that we serve and meet human needs without discrimination).

We hope that this report reflects the large variety and diversity of our work, from after-school programmes and pre-school education, community centres, drop-in centres and shelters, health care and medical assistance, employment support and training, legal advice, homelessness prevention and housing support, etc., through to youth groups, mothers/parenting meetings, Bible studies, and music groups. Our work is based on the understanding that humans are holistic beings and therefore many of the projects take an integrated approach, as meeting the “human” dimension and spiritual needs of people is an essential part of our work.

In all our work we aim to make participation the starting point. We believe that Roma must be empowered to make changes for themselves; therefore, the free will and participation of Roma from the very beginning and at every level of all inclusion initiatives is essential to create ownership and to ensure the dignity and respect of the individual. The need to start by accepting all people as they are in order to build relationships of trust is highlighted throughout this report. Also highlighted in the report is how we effectively employ Roma in the structures of our social services and corps (church) ministries. For this

reason we believe that The Salvation Army as an organisation can serve as a model of inclusion.

A number of the projects and programmes highlighted in this report are aimed specifically at Roma communities; however, most programmes are run based on need and not ethnicity, where Roma are among the beneficiaries but not exclusively targeted. The strategy of The Salvation Army differs from that of others in that we offer not only short-term interventions and project-based initiatives, but we are committed for the long-term to ensure our presence from one generation to the next in order to foster the sustainable development of the community where we are working. The Salvation Army brings hope to communities where hope may have been lost and firmly believes in the possibility of transformation of individuals, neighbourhoods and communities.

This report was written to make the work The Salvation Army is doing visible both to external partners and also internally, in order to encourage the sharing of knowledge, ideas and inspiration within the Army. Our hope is that policy makers will take on board our recommendations and recognise the important role that churches play – in particular, The Salvation Army, with its long history of service provision for the poorest and most marginalised in society. We hope that this report will also support the work of The Salvation Army through the recently established Roma Mission Network and that it will be used to promote the sharing of good practice and the development of policy and advocacy actions, complementing the official “Advisory Statement on Roma Inclusion”¹.

The content of this report was gathered in a “mapping questionnaire” answered by Salvation Army representatives working with Roma on the ground. Each country report gives an overview of work in this area, a short description of each project and the key challenges witnessed; and finally recommendations are made for national governments. In the introduction, we give a summary of the challenges to Roma inclusion, as well as a summary of the role of The Salvation Army. At the end of the report there are recommendations for the EU, given that the Roma issue is addressed at EU level, in particular through the current European Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies.

¹The statement is currently available in English, German and Hungarian

WHERE WE WORK

This map indicates the countries where The Salvation Army is most active with Roma in Europe.



CHALLENGES TO ROMA INCLUSION

Based on the mapping questionnaire answered by Salvation Army representatives working with Roma on the ground, we can conclude that the following issues are key barriers in the successful inclusion of Roma across Europe, although of course discrepancies exist between countries. We also acknowledge that Roma are not a homogeneous group, rather there are many diverse groups, with diverse cultures and languages. And many Roma do not experience these barriers to inclusion at all.

Administrative difficulties – without identification documents, Roma cannot work, rent a home, access services etc. creating a vicious cycle of poverty.

Negative stereotypes as well as narrow positive stereotypes – e.g. “they are good musicians”.

Statelessness leading to lack of access to rights.

Negative media representation which feeds discrimination.

Lack of access to fundamental human rights.

Lack of political will.

Poor housing and living conditions.

Lack of public funding.

Poor levels of education, school segregation and discrimination in institutions.

Lack of self-worth and self-esteem of Roma.

Language barriers and illiteracy.

Lack of a positive ethnic identity as Roma.

Lack of employment opportunities.

Lack of knowledge of history and culture among both majority and minority populations.

Discrimination and anti-gypsyism.

An assimilative culture of integration – lack of cultural equality.

WHAT ROLE FOR THE SALVATION ARMY?

(See our website for our official 'Advisory Statement on Roma Inclusion')²

The Salvation Army believes that its role is to **reach out to the poorest and most marginalised in society**. We want to reach those who are at the edge of society, those living in ghettos, as well as in rural areas, and those living in very poor conditions. Our role is to welcome all without discrimination. Through the provision of social and health services, Salvation Army social workers facilitate **community development and defend the rights** of the Roma and help to improve living conditions for them.

The Salvation Army helps to **empower** Roma communities through participation in our programmes and activities. As a social service provider, The Salvation Army can meet people on an individual basis, **building relationships of trust** with Roma communities. We have been receiving Roma people just as they are without trying to change them.

They often just need somebody who sets an example for them, investing time and care in a personal way. Personal trust is a very essential part of this process. We want to be partners and to help Roma solve their own problems. The Salvation Army can also **empower** Roma through **enabling and supporting access to the labour market**, creating jobs and providing support to enter vocational training. Working with the parents as well as children, The Salvation Army **supports families** to encourage their children to go to school with hope for a better future and provide educational support to encourage this.

We continue to **train Roma in leadership and representation**. Through building relationships of trust, we can educate Roma community leaders to be an example for others and to help open the doors to education for them and for their children. We hope to be a **bridge** between Roma people and the government and we can also **provide platforms** for participation in the wider society.

The role of The Salvation Army is to promote human development, well-being, security and social inclusion and to raise awareness of this issue and therefore the Army should actively participate in **developing and shaping social policy**.

"Our aspiration is that apart from material aid and social support of Roma, The Salvation Army in Belgium could one day make a major contribution to the implementation of national social policies, ensuring the viability of any proposal and assessing the likely impact." (Belgium)

Social workers in The Salvation Army are also **advocates** fighting for the rights of the Roma and working to obtain the necessary resources by trying to convince the other institutions or individuals of the needs and legitimate rights of the Roma. In this sense, a visible presence of The Salvation Army at the local, regional and/or national level in relation to Roma can attract public attention and social responsibility. We also engage in awareness-raising actions and advocate to the governmental authorities for sustainable Roma inclusion and the development of long-term projects.

The Salvation Army has gained expertise in working with Roma families, therefore we believe it is our role to **share our expertise and experience** (also internally through the Roma Mission Network). Our role is to share our inclusive approach, always with an open door for the marginalised/excluded Roma families, and to share our methodology with our partners and stakeholders, to work together to open up new opportunities for Roma. We also want to **collaborate transnationally** to have a global vision for Roma, but also to strengthen partnerships between destination and source countries (in the case of migrating Roma) to establish projects and financial support for already existing programmes.

"Being an international organisation with local work in most of the relevant countries for Roma in Europe, we have the potential to become leaders in Europe. We can also become leaders in showing the positive consequences for Europe of actually giving Roma a chance." (Norway)

The Salvation Army offers a good foundation with **practical and spiritual education** for Roma. We try to be good spiritual leaders, people whom they may see as an example and in whom they can trust. We want to give the gift of personal faith in Jesus Christ, of being integrated and accepted into The Salvation Army family, as well as motivation and support for self-help.

"The oldest and primary aim of The Salvation Army to be close to people in need, to be the friend of those who have no friends, to promote integration and well-being, while we proclaim the Good News." (Italy)

If we help people or give support, we don't do this just to receive feelings of gratitude, nor to simply improve life conditions, but to see change and see people finally escape difficult situations.

²<http://www.salvationarmy.eu/euaffairs/EUAffairspolicypriorities>

KEY ELEMENTS OF HOW THE SALVATION ARMY IS EFFECTIVELY ADDRESSING THESE CHALLENGES

▶ The Salvation Army meets basic human needs through the provision of person-centred social services.

▶ Churches create a safe place where relationships of trust are built naturally over time, allowing access to marginalised communities at grass-roots level.

▶ The Salvation Army is always engaged in communities in the long-term , not only with shorter-term projects.

▶ We are bridge builders between municipalities and Roma communities.

▶ We can help local authorities use funding effectively with the participation of Roma.

▶ We help people to find their value and self-worth, serving all without judgment or discrimination.

▶ We help people to find their value and self-worth, serving all without judgment or discrimination.

▶ We encourage people to value and appreciate their ethnic identity and Roma culture.

▶ By working with Roma, churches can change the negative attitudes of non-Roma and help promote a more positive image in society.

▶ The Salvation Army can inform Roma of their human and social rights and civil obligations.

▶ The Salvation Army works as a mediator between schools and Roma communities.

▶ The Salvation Army gives hope back to people and communities for change.



WHAT ROMA SAY

We asked Roma why they like to come to The Salvation Army and participate in our programmes and what gives them hope for the future. This is what they said...

« They can help me to find something to work at, I want to stop begging »

« Coffee for free »

« I get courage, I feel stronger, somebody is concerned about my life »

« I like to come to listen to the songs and the music in the Sunday service in the Romanian language. It is like at home, in Romania. We can come to pray. »

« We receive clothes and blankets »

« We can attend Sunday service »

« It is good to participate at Christmas time in the Sunday service »

« To eat, warm ourselves, charging the card of the mobile phone »

« They give us courage and encourage us »

« We are welcomed, thank them very much for their help for finding something to work at, we need The Salvation Army to be here, they are doing a good job »

« We can meet other Roma like us »

« You are helping us about our health problems, the health workshops are very useful for us »

« Life is difficult, but when you have people that are close and understand then it's easier. And maybe that is why God led me to The Salvation Army »

« I got a job through the centre, and also worked part time at the centre »

« My child was on the verge of dropping out of school, but now the situation is better. He has good marks and more self-esteem. » (One of the parents who have children at Geneza community centre)

« Now I feel proud to be Roma »

(One of the children from Geneza, after learning about Roma history and tradition on the 8th of April)



TESTIMONIES
AND REFLECTIVE ESSAYS

TRANSFORMATION IN THE ROMA SETTLEMENT OF PLAVECKÝ ŠTVRTOK, SLOVAKIA,

By Captain Vitalie Chiriac



«We believe that from these children, a new generation will grow up, a generation that will change the history of this settlement.»

The ministry among the country's Roma communities – one of The Salvation Army's main focus areas in Slovakia – is also developing, with outreach taking place in the three outposts of Galanta, Plavecký Štvrtok, and Pezinok. The Roma here live in extreme poverty, are socially excluded and face a bleak future. The Salvation Army has built bridges in these three distinct communities and is already providing essential services to meet deep-rooted needs. Much of the current work is geared towards helping children and young people through play activities and after-school groups.

The settlement of Plavecký Štvrtok has mostly had a negative reputation, known for its terrible fights, alcoholism, adultery and ongoing quarrels among Roma people. The majority of children from the local Roma community do not attend any pre-school education in Plavecký Štvrtok. Even if Roma children attend pre-school, they are neglected and not able to keep pace with other children. The same is true when they start the first grade at elementary/primary school. Differences of abilities between them and their peers are so great that teachers are not able

to manage the situation and Roma children remain at the same level. There are some cases when children in the 7th grade still can't read and write. They are capable of learning, but need more time and attention.

However, today it is common to see about 15 Roma children of pre-school age, with several Roma pre-school teaching assistants walking through the settlement and town streets. This has had a big influence on public opinion; people stop to ask questions. These Roma teaching assistants are members of The Salvation Army's local corps (church) and they also have access to further education, the opportunity to finish primary school education, or to get special training for children's work. We also can see great progress in the lives of these children, as they receive daily and regular attention for several hours and enjoy attending this programme. We believe that from these children, a new generation will grow up, a generation that will change the history of this settlement.

For more information about The Salvation Army's work in Slovakia see the country report below.

SOCIAL ENTERPRISE FOR ROMA IN ROMANIA WE ARE JUST GETTING STARTED!

By Simen Mørstad Johansen, Project Coordinator of Norway/Romania Project

«While alleviating urgent needs in Norway, we need to facilitate real solutions in home communities in Romania.»

Since the mid-2000s we have witnessed what has been called the third mass migration of Roma to Western Europe. In the streets of Oslo, and other European cities, Roma especially from Romania have made a livelihood for their families through different kinds of street work³, begging and to some extent petty crime. After working for a few years with migrating Roma from Romania in Oslo we wrote two reports: "Praying for a better future"⁴ and "Romas in the Tiger* City"⁵. Here we argued that begging and street work is not a sustainable solution for anyone and that, while alleviating urgent needs in Norway, we need to facilitate real solutions in the street workers' home communities in Romania. Based on these reports we came up with the following strategy:

- Build up the trust between Roma and non-Roma
- Set up sanitary facilities and winter accommodation to alleviate the needs on the streets in Norway
- Set up programmes with individual counselling for migrants coming to Norway
- Help build up The Salvation Army's work in Romania

For us to meet the needs of Roma in their home communities in Romania we wanted to build up integrated social services targeting the needs of Roma families. The European Framework for Roma Inclusion⁶ highlights the importance of providing access for Roma to education, health care, work and housing. In accordance with these recommendations, our basic operational set-up is a Community Centre in collaboration with the local authorities. Through simple programmes within the areas of education and health care we aim to empower participating families. When people participate with their resources we believe that the local work can grow out organically from these centres and provide further for the local needs.

There are many after-school and vocational programmes directed at Roma in Romania. Many of them do great work. However, most of them have constant problems in sustaining the activities, being dependent on short-term project financing. Breaking the vicious cycle of poverty to bring about real social inclusion necessitates a sustainable long-term effort. This is why we, in parallel with the set-up of quality social work, aimed to develop an integrated social enterprise model providing financial sustainability both for the families and for the continuation of the work. In the autumn of 2014 we managed to obtain the necessary start-up capital from the poverty alleviation programme of the Norway Grants⁷ in Romania to do this. Writing now in May 2017,

after almost three years of blood, sweat, laughter and tears, we now have two running community centres and the social enterprise SalvatTex. With our second-hand clothes venture, we provide jobs and income in one warehouse, six shops and two Redesign workshops. Members from over 200 families participate in our programmes. This includes 100 pupils that every week get assistance with homework and almost 30 adults who participate at any time in our work training programme SalvaJob with a temporarily fixed income through formal employment at SalvatTex. Just as important, SalvatTex is slowly heading towards making a profit. We have a reason to pat ourselves on the back for a moment, but not for too long. We still need to become better at:

- Facilitating participation
- Making room for and lifting up Roma identity
- Getting SalvaJob participants into formal employment in other companies
- Extending the work within Romania, especially to the rural areas

In our reports, we recommended the development of the social work in Romania. Now that we actually have developed this, we have new possibilities to help resolving the situation for the Roma migrating to Norway.

On the streets of cities in Norway the situation is more or less the same for the Roma street workers. Street workers belonging to the same communities as 8 years ago still travel to Norway to access cash. We do not consider begging and street work to be a sustainable solution, so in addition to providing for the urgent needs of the users, the next step is to connect the work in Norway and Romania directly. In Oslo, we are in the process of building up our basic sanitary services and counselling services with a specialised migration centre. Here we will focus on migrating Roma.

The main reason for the presence of Roma in the West is a lack of access to jobs in Romania⁸. One of the strategies we believe will help to resolve this problem is to build up a transnational SalvaJob with individual job counselling. Through an extension of the social enterprises of The Salvation Army in Romania we aim to facilitate access to jobs in the participants' home communities, even in rural areas.

After more than 7 years working with migrating Roma in Norway and 2.5 years of project work in Romania we have learned many lessons. We have made some adjustments and additions to the initial map we drew up in our reports 4 years ago, but we are still moving in the right direction. This is why we say that we are only just getting started; now we just have to keep up the pace!

3-Street work refers to selling magazines, collecting bottles and sales of different kinds of goods.

4-Praying for a Better Future; The Roma Outreach 2011, Salvation Army Norway Social Services.

http://www.frelsesarmeen.no/filestore/PDFer/romrapport_lowres.pdf

5-Nardbø, Thov Midtsund, Romas in the Tiger City (2013), Salvation Army Substance and Abuse Service.

<http://www.frelsesarmeen.no/filestore/PDFer/Romrapport2014.pdf>

6-<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52011DC0173&from=EN>

7-<http://eeagrants.org/programme/view/RO25/PA40>

8-See for example the 2015 FAFO report "When poverty meets affluence" about Romanian commuters in three Scandinavian cities.

<http://www.fafo.no/images/pub/2015/954-inmat-trykk.pdf>

WE HAVE TO START BY ACCEPTING ROMA AS THEY ARE

By Zoltán Benedek, the corps officer of The Salvation Army corps in Debrecen, Hungary



I am the corps officer of The Salvation Army corps in Debrecen. For me it means a lot to be able to reach out in ministry to Roma people since I myself am half Roma by origin. I think that the Roma mission is a quite difficult area and I would like to mention upfront that I do not

think there are any templates. By this I mean that things that work in Debrecen might not work elsewhere. In my opinion, the Roma community consists of people so varied and diverse that we cannot handle them all the same way.

How we provide help in Hungary: At present, the congregation in Debrecen has about 70 members, 90% of whom are Roma. Our ministry consists of two parts. One is spiritual work and the other is social work. I think they are both very important and neither of them can be neglected. The greatest help these people can get is hearing the gospel. We have congregational events on a weekly basis where they have the opportunity to get to know the Bible better and thus they can become stronger and grow in their faith and in their relationship with God. Every month we distribute dry food parcels to needy families (I say needy because not every Roma family receives such parcels, since not all have financial difficulties). Last winter we had several opportunities to distribute firewood, which also was a great help to them. And finally, we frequently organise clothes distribution, which again means a lot for many Roma families.

It is not my experience that we have obtained durable results because we have given them social help. Although this is very good and of great help for building relationships, social help does not have the power to retain people. Proclaiming the gospel is, on the contrary, a much greater success. I have contact with several Roma families whose lives have changed quite a bit due to God's gospel. Lots of youngsters come to our congregation who have given up drugs, alcohol and a criminal lifestyle. They have restarted school, possibly found work and have become supporters of their families instead of dependants. I think the greatest success is when somebody understands that they need to change, that they have the possibility to do so and make good use of it!

In spite of all the difficulties, I think that there are lots of possibilities in the Roma communities. Unfortunately, there are few who are reaching out to them and even fewer who do it efficiently. This is why I would like to stress

the fact that, if we want to reach out to them.

One of the most important things is acceptance! Without acceptance they will not even talk to us! (This is my personal experience!)

But if they accept somebody and in addition they like and are fond of that person, it can have a great influence on them.

Furthermore, there are lots of talents in the Roma community. We can see in our congregation that they are good at a lot of things. This is why there is a huge opportunity in letting them show us what they are talented at. It is important to counter the negative stories people usually hear about Roma very precisely. This attitude excludes a lot of Roma people, even those who do not have a "bad" lifestyle. In our congregations (both in Debrecen and Nyírac nád) there are a lot of talented musicians. Our worship group consists of 8 members, 7 of whom are Roma. These young people are very talented at music. Among them there is a graduate violin teacher. I would also like to mention sports, where we also know several talented Roma people. In Nyírac nád, one of our members is the football coach who has contact with a lot of youngsters due to sports. And finally, it is my experience that there are lots of Roma who like to work and can work. The problem is that they are not given the possibility to do so because of prejudice.

To sum up, I would say that I recommend ministry to the Roma only to people who really have their welfare at heart, to those who really can accept them, who can even love them together with all their bad habits. Based on my experience so far I can say for sure that they sense it quickly if someone is not loving towards them and this will make them close all their gates! I think it is wrong to educate them out of the Roma identity and culture, because this would result in a personality disorder and I think this is not our goal. On the contrary, we need to help them leave their bad habits and harmful lifestyle behind and PRESENT a new way!

A TRANSFORMED LIFE.... AFTER 12 YEARS OF ADDICTION TO DRUGS AND ALCOHOL

A personal testimony by Patrik Herák



When I was 15 there was a huge shift in my life, when I got involved with a group of boys who did many bad things, and I with them. We stole, we deceived people; we were bad. Then followed even bigger things, and so it happened that I was sent to prison. My mum loved me very much and when they put me in jail at 15 years old she suffered greatly. It had a great effect on her mental state. She became ill and, in hospital, they discovered that she had cancer, and I didn't suspect anything. My family chose not to say anything, in case I would hurt myself. Sometime later they released me. My mum was already dying, a month later the illness took her, she died and my life collapsed.

I didn't know how to go on; my father blamed me, thought that it was all my fault and threw me out of the flat. I was on the streets, I sought help from my friends and they offered me two possibilities: alcohol or drugs. Alcohol I knew, but drugs were a new thing for me – so I started with drugs at the age of 15.

Time flew by and my life was at that moment amazing, full of passion, money, life in the dark without any aim, using something that stole my life, my feelings and love for people. I was without emotion; sometimes I hurt people to get money for drugs. My wife, whom I have been with now for 18 years, experienced everything with me; it was torture for my family. I was the puppet of the devil and his instrument. Now I know this! But before I didn't!

I thought I was living well if I lived without obligations and without boundaries.

It lasted 12 years. I was addicted to drugs; I took them through injecting by needle. During this time in our lives, my son Enrico was born, when I was 18. And I still took drugs. At that time I was a very aggressive person. I beat my wife, Ilona, I was unfaithful to her and it came to the point that we separated. On one occasion, I went to her parents to pick up some clothes. Immediately we started an argument. At that time I was at rock bottom. My wife's oldest brother had received Jesus and was living in England. He had videoed a small group meeting and sent it on a DVD. Ilona was watching it, the Christian brothers were giving their testimony about Jesus, about what He had done on the cross at Calvary; that He had paid for the sins of the world, and for me. The Christian brothers preached the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The truth of the gospel touched my heart. I went deep into my heart and recognised that I was a sinner. The truth and love convicted me and at the same time showed me the way out of that sinful life. I knew that this could save me from the poor and miserable life we had been living. I accepted Christ into my life and made Him my Lord. I confessed my sins. And then there was a miracle – at that moment the Lord Jesus freed me from the 12 years of addiction to drugs and alcohol. I am a new creation. He saved my life, my family and my marriage.

I have now been saved for 6 years and I and my whole family serve with the love of Christ. We live in Margate in Great Britain. My wife Ilona and I have become soldiers in The Salvation Army. Life with Christ is a journey on which there are trials and there are days when we ourselves do not have strength. But Jesus lifts us up and gives us peace, love, joy; it is a life of hope, with the promise of fullness. It is Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour.

I am very grateful to our Lord Jesus for the eternal life I have in Him. And I thank Him for the family which He gave me in Christ, for the church and the pastors, whom Jesus has given us in our lives. This is my testimony about Jesus Christ, the living God.

UNDERSTANDING ROMA CULTURE AND SPIRITUALITY IN HUNGARY

By CSÉKI Győző, corps officer of the Salvation Army corps in Miskolc

During the past twelve years a large part of our ministry was in Roma Mission. This was partly due to the fact that in our places of ministry we were surrounded mostly by people of Roma origin. As my wife and I are also of Roma origin, we could reach out to them in complete openness. I need to add that our convictions and biblical vision are the formation of mixed congregations. It is not our goal to plant exclusively Roma congregations, but this is determined by local circumstances. We had to take into account that there is a huge difference between town mission and mission in the Roma settlement. Roma and "Gadjos" (as the non-Roma are called by the Roma) can live out their faith much more easily in the same congregation than the Roma living in a settlement.

Roma living in town are more open and receive stimuli from the urban environment more, while those living in segregated areas in the countryside have a much narrower perspective and have been socialising in an environment with a lot fewer stimuli.

This is why it is much more difficult for them to open up and welcome strangers who do not belong to their community, even when they can see the intentions are to help. It takes time and we need to be authentic in order for them to start to trust and accept us. This is partly due to the fact that they were often used for political aims.

Generally the Roma are very emotional, they express all their emotions visibly: anger, dislike, joy, sorrow, rejection, fear, worry, mourning, etc. They live out their emotions by expressing them and do not hide them as people who are more restrained in their behaviour do. For example, when there is a burial they faint and tear their clothes and roar to express their mourning.

To express their joy they dance, sing and are loud. Getting to know the emotional world and culture of the Roma people can help us a lot in our reaching out to them.

I would like to stress that it is important for those preparing to minister to Roma to start getting acquainted with their customs, culture and social background. It is our experience and our conviction that those proclaiming the gospel or doing social work among the Roma cannot do so if they have judgment, scorn and contempt in their heart – not even if they do not understand their slant on life, the way they raise their children, their married life and their everyday life. Even if those doing ministry do not visibly express their negative feelings towards them, these people will sense them and button up towards the helpers. In such cases they will only use the helpers to achieve their goals, even in an aggressive manner if needed, because no empathy exists between them.

It is our experience that Roma people and children living in a settlement or in very poor circumstances can be excessively sensitive and proud. When they do not understand the situation they are in, they will suddenly react by taking offence. We need to be very patient and understanding with them, but the most important thing is for us to be fair towards them. It took us several years to learn that we cannot reform them in our own image to our own value system, not even if we have the best of intentions. We will not be able to approach them in the spirit of Christ and with understanding as long as we wonder why they are dirty, how they can live and think as they do, why they don't go to school or find work, why they can't just change. Today we know that we can influence their lives only with the truthfulness, love and mercy of God's Word while being led by the Holy Spirit. We know and we believe that when the Almighty God brings change to their hearts, when they repent and are born again, then their whole thinking and their way of life will also radically change. Of course, we need to respect their attitude towards life and their freedom of choice, even if we do not think it complies with social norms, except for the case when it breaks the law.

A large part of Roma people are open to religion and to the acceptance of the idea of life after death, but their faith is not based on Bible truths. Generally, they form their understanding of God from oral traditions, superstitions, occult experiences, visions, dreams and church pictures. Although they pray to and respect "Little Jesus" and the Virgin Mary, their faith and life is thoroughly imbued with occult influences.



We have the experience that the Roma are open to listen to and accept the Word of God, they are happy to accept God and make their choice, but this decision can change overnight. At first, we thought that they were turning away from their faith decision because of material hardships or illness. But God has shown us that we need to dig deeper with them when we speak to them about repentance and becoming free from sin. In almost every case it turned out that occultism and superstition lay behind their relapse. Thus today in pastoral care, we assess the chains holding them back, when we recognise this, we pray together for Jesus to set them free, using simple language and not Christian jargon to point out the necessity for being freed.

These experiences are also due to the fact that, before we were converted, my wife and I took part in several spiritual séances and my wife used to read cards and interpret dreams. Because of this, perhaps it can be better understood why, after reaching a certain level, the Roma cannot progress. It is because they need to be completely set free through Jesus Christ, and this they have to understand. If the occult background is not eradicated in their life, it will linger in their beliefs and hinder their relationship with God.

The Roma are afraid of "God's punishment" and they have an image of a God who is not the God of grace and mercy. My wife and I have understood that, as God's children and as officers of The Salvation Army, we can help the Roma community to rise only by proclaiming God's love, grace and truth. God's Word and the Holy Spirit can bring change to the lives of those who can open themselves to God's love. In Acts 10:34 and Romans 2:11 we read: "God is no respecter of persons." So God does not care what the origin of the person who accepts his grace through Jesus Christ is.

It is our experience that we can only walk very slowly with the Roma on the path of faith, but it is possible. They have great joy when they praise Jesus with songs and they can sincerely weep over their sins.

Oftentimes we struggle with illiteracy and the social hardships and discrimination that they encounter.

It is our experience with other churches in Hungary that not too many pastors take part in Roma mission work that involves the proclaiming of the gospel and planting of congregations. The only people doing this ministry should be those who have a calling in this field or who are inspired by their Christian identity to do it. When people who do it out of obligation and do not have a calling from God or a personal conviction start reaching out to Roma, they can cause harm to themselves and to the ministry and will have a feeling of failure. In my opinion, one cannot do such ministry under dictation since the calling from God is not the same as our personal position.



COUNTRY REPORTS

BELGIUM



Respondents: Teodora Salcudean and Jacques Delatte



The Belgian Salvation Army's work with Roma is still low scale and recent. It started in 2016 as a response to growing concern about Roma begging on the streets of Belgium. The outreach initiative detailed below was started by one of the long-established social centres of The Salvation Army, Foyer Georges Motte, which is a centre for single homeless men in Brussels.

Although the resources to help were limited, we have been able to contact several grass-roots NGOs working with Roma in Belgium and we continue to put people in need in contact with the relevant services (legal, administrative, medical, training and education, etc.). Although this is just one outreach programme, the potential to develop our work as well as cooperate with other NGOs in Belgium on this issue is still to be explored. Furthermore, more research needs to be carried out to identify where these Roma are falling

through the gaps in the Belgian social welfare system and how The Salvation Army can step into that gap.

For more information: www.armedusalut.be

► SOCIAL PROJECTS

Material, food and administrative support in one Roma camp, Brussels

On 9 November 2016 the staff team from the Foyer Georges Motte distributed for the first time food and clothes parcels to the residents of a camp in Brussels, inhabited by mostly Roma from Romania. All were unemployed and without Belgian residence papers. The majority said that they begged or occasionally worked illegally to survive. The children were not enrolled in schools. The residents were informed about the social service assistance that they could receive in The Salvation Army centre Foyer Georges Motte and were invited to make contact if needed. The following visits involved the distribution of hygiene materials.

Later in the year, the camp was dismantled and the Roma moved elsewhere, so the Army continued to visit and distribute food parcels there. The Army was able to help a number of Roma by contacting the Romanian embassy in Belgium to obtain administrative documents or update expired Romanian identity cards.

Contact with the people living in the camp was facilitated thanks to one of the staff members speaking Romanian and the Army was able to establish social links with the Roma families. Our initiatives were appreciated and met their immediate needs but we were not able to solve their

problems in the long term and therefore we referred people to other organisations who could help.

► CHALLENGES

The discrimination of Roma in society means they have very limited access to or lack of training in regard to employment, housing and health care. There is a vicious cycle of poverty, discrimination, restricted access to employment and poor education. All these issues need to be addressed to break the vicious cycle.

Based on the information we have, it is fair to say that the Roma we encountered are close to the absolute poverty line. However, without an identity card, they have no access to social rights or employment. Roma, who are members of the European Community, are not eligible for refugee status despite their poor living conditions.

The majority of the population of Roma is a young population capable of working. However, their lack of education and experience means that they do not have access to certain types of jobs. Being included in school and taking language courses require higher levels of education. Thus, if the Roma receive more education and stay in school, the economic benefits are potentially higher too.

Being excluded from the labour market obviously contributes to the continued exclusion of society, which "obliges" the Roma to find other means of generating income, which can further reinforce discrimination.



RECOMMENDATIONS TO NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

► Ensure that inclusion programmes place more emphasis on adults, especially on parents, alongside other vulnerable groups (children, the elderly, women and people with health problems).

► Remove administrative barriers and facilitate access to identity/resident cards to enable access to the labour market and access to health-care services to break the cycle of poverty.

► Provide funding specifically to support the integration of Roma – such as affordable or free language classes to promote access to the labour market.

THE CZECH REPUBLIC



Respondent: Mgr. Marcela Stryjova

The Salvation Army runs a number of social services from which Roma can benefit, including a homeless prevention programme, an asylum house and a night shelter. We also run a low-threshold club facility for children, teens and youth which is largely attended by Roma.

The Salvation Army has been working to gradually raise awareness by carrying out activities in public places (singing during city events). People get to see that Roma are very skilled and reliable, that their lives can change for the better and in this way we help to promote Roma rights. We have started to work at grass-roots level but hope to develop work with ministers and other NGOs within the next 2-3 years.

For more information: www.armadaspasybrno.cz

► SOCIAL PROJECTS

(not exclusively for Roma but Roma are among beneficiaries)

Homeless prevention programme, Ostrava, Brno and Bohumin

This programme offers support and advice to help people maintain their tenancy and is open to all, including Roma. The service strengthens their social inclusion and aims to enhance the skills, knowledge and awareness of tenants, enabling them to independently manage the demands associated with employment, housekeeping, parenting and childcare. It also helps people to access their rights and enjoy supportive social relationships, encouraging them to care for themselves physically and emotionally.

We give practical teaching on budgeting, learning how to pay rent and energy bills regularly. We also give guidance and teaching on cooperation in solving problematic situations (interpersonal relationships, searching for work) and resolving problems connected with accommodation, e.g.: technical issues, repair work. We aim to help prevent abuse of social allowances, to motivate people to find work and to encourage them to allow their children to receive education.

Low-threshold facility for children and youth, Ostrava and Brno

At the club in Brno of the around 160 children who are served, 95% are Roma. The children's club is registered with social services and focuses on after-school education, play and the personal development of children. The only requirement is that people need to be willing to cooperate and be actively involved in solving their problems through personal face-to-face meetings, through education and activation programmes and activities. In this way, we support the quality of their future living, which also respects the principles of democratic society and Christian values.

Asylum house and night shelter

This service is offered to anyone without shelter. The individual services reflect the needs of people, who are in different living conditions due to the loss of their accommodation, and relates to their different levels of motivation and the different possibilities of individual users. There are just a few Roma people among our beneficiaries, although overall the number we reach of other groups of homeless people is high.

► CHURCH COMMUNITY PROJECTS

«Over the last 2.5 years we have seen many people come to faith and their lives have been changed on spiritual, physical, material and social levels. As they grow, they slowly start to help others. The Christian corps (church) is growing and every Sunday we see new faces. We build new disciples and we see that active Roma Christians who have been visiting our corps have a heart for homeless people. They want to help them, to serve them and to pray with them.»



The aim of this ministry is to enlarge the Roma Christian community and connect the Roma with other communities. The goal is holistic, helping people in all aspects, spiritual, practical and material, especially helping the neediest. We aim to train Roma ministers and to bring The Salvation Army vision closer to the new Roma church leaders.

► CHALLENGES

The main challenges among the Roma are poor levels of education and segregated education and a high rate of evictions, poor housing standards and living conditions.

Roma often have problems to find accommodation and employment. Two main challenges are to confront their problems boldly and to send their children to school. The Czech government is seen to be helping Roma, they are not uncaring about their problems; however, the media only show negative perspectives of Roma as being violent and being thieves. We are missing reports and stories from the other perspective; there are many Roma people who live a normal life and who work. Many Roma are really trying to engage with and integrate into society.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

► Ensure that media portray Roma in a balanced and positive way.

► Eliminate "positive discrimination": set regulations and rules for all society and compel both sides to cooperate.

HUNGARY



Respondent: Captain Győző Cséki

The Salvation Army has permanent church-based community projects in three towns and two villages in Hungary. There are also a number of social projects, including social kitchens in Debrecen and Gyöngyös and three in Budapest, in addition to two drop-in day centres for the homeless in Budapest and four social shelters in Budapest. The social projects are open to all, but Roma are among the beneficiaries of these services.

As a church, we also provide:

- Christian education and worship
- Children's camps
- Specific meetings for men and for women and children
- Distribution of food and clothes
- Christian teaching and discipleship, mentoring and lifestyle counselling

For more information: www.udvhadsereg.hu



► SOCIAL PROJECTS

(not exclusively for Roma but Roma are among beneficiaries)

- Social kitchens in Debrecen and Gyöngyös and three in Budapest
- Two day drop-in centres for the homeless in Budapest
- Four social shelters in Budapest

The aim of these services is to improve the situation of Roma and to help them help themselves. We have an ongoing presence in these places and adapt the programmes according to the situation. We give out on average 1,170 portions of food each day and meet around 144 persons a day in the drop-in centres.

► CHURCH COMMUNITY PROJECTS

Roma ministry, Sajókaza, Miskolc, Gyöngyös, Nyírcsád, Debrecen

The aim of the ministry is to improve the situation of Roma people, encouraging them to help themselves and each other and to create Salvation Army communities and help with integration into the village or town community. The work is developing slowly, continuously and steadily by connecting with the Roma culture.

► CHALLENGES

The Roma often lack a sense of self-worth. They face high levels of unemployment and poor levels of education. National legislation is not always conducive to solving these problems. Housing is an ongoing problem, as well as discrimination.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

► Ensure financial support goes directly to the Roma communities for which it is intended and that they benefit directly from this (indirect support does not reach the Roma communities).

ITALY



Respondent: Aux-Lieutenant Ilaria Castaldo

In Italy the work with Roma is just beginning. There are two low-scale projects with mothers and children and a 'solidarity dinner' programme in Naples. In the future we hope to carry out advocacy/awareness-raising actions to promote Roma rights with the local social services.

For more information: www.esercitodellasalvezza.org

► CHURCH COMMUNITY PROJECTS

Mother and baby support, Naples

The aim is to promote education and to support mothers and babies by providing hygiene products. The project has just started and is the first of its kind in The Salvation Army in Italy.

'Cena Solidale' (Solidarity Dinner), Naples

(not exclusive to Roma)

The aim of the project is to eat together and to be near people in need. The programme is open to all people who want to come and have a dinner together. We also offer second-hand clothes. We invite people sent to us by social

services for food help; we have people from the Roma camp, as well as people from The Salvation Army corps (church) fellowship. The dinner is held once a month and we have around 40 people attending (including children). It is successful because we meet together as a family and people feel welcome. We have the chance to show the love of God in a practical way.

For more information: www.esercitodellasalvezza.org

► CHALLENGES

The main challenge for Roma is integration into society. Many of the Roma live in camps and live life very differently from Italian people. The biggest problem they face is marginalisation. They are seen by many as dirty and dishonest people, who dig in the garbage staining the city. In Naples, the majority of the camps are not regularised. Time and again the local government promises to build new regular camps, but nothing happens. Italian people do not actually want to have these camps in their cities and, as in the case of immigration; this is a growing social problem.

MOLDOVA



Respondent: Major Don Gilger



While we do not identify the Roma that we serve in Moldova, thousands receive help every year in our 16 corps (churches) and 37 projects/programmes. Through these projects we estimate that we reach 25,000 people annually. We have seven "See Me After -School Projects", a Canteen Feeding Programme and the Budesti Children's Programme. We also have projects in the following cities: Beltsi, Orhei, Cahul, Ungheni, Chadir Lunga, Edinets, Dubossary.

The aim of our projects is to create safe environments for children, who in turn get better grades and have better health through good nutrition. We also provide a hot meal to seniors. We recognise that we need to improve our identification of clients served as a way to better provide for their specific needs.

We meet with local mayors and government officials on a daily basis across Moldova, although, at this time, not specifically on Roma issues. We are very well connected with local and national government contacts here in Moldova. We also meet regularly with NGOs on all issues, including Roma.

For more information: <http://armatasalvarii.md/en>

► CHALLENGES

Roma continue to be a segment of society, with a much lower education, that is looked down on. The Salvation Army in Moldova could identify and serve the Roma population specifically, but would need funding for project development and implementation. Although the local/national Moldovan government identifies that this is an issue, it does not have solutions due to lack of funding.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

Invest in the Roma population to develop and implement projects.

NETHERLANDS



Respondent: Hugo van Meeuwen (National Contact Person)



The Salvation Army in the Netherlands has been involved with supporting Roma and provided Roma family counselling for the last 15 years in many municipalities in the Netherlands. We work on average with approximately 30-40 families in several major cities. We have a lot of experience-based practices on how to work with Roma families. We help to ensure that children attend school and prevent them from being exploited. We also help parents obtain qualifications to work, in partnership with municipalities and educational institutions.

We will soon start a national Roma Task Force. The government-appointed National Roma Contact Point is a member in our programme. We work with local and national governments on all levels on the Roma issue. They see us as a Roma expert and refer many Roma cases to The Salvation Army. We work together with other NGOs. One particular NGO, Defence for Children, is our partner in much of our work. Together we look at how best to overcome challenges in specific Roma cases where Roma children are involved.

For more information: www.legerdesheils.nl/ljr

► SOCIAL PROJECTS

Roma MPG (Multi-Problem Families) project

The Roma MPG project is run on a national level in several major cities in the Netherlands (Utrecht, Enschede, Rotterdam, Lelystad, amongst others).

We developed a method for professionals to work with Roma in a multi-agency approach. This project is part of a broader National Programme from the government, together with the police, other organisations and 12

municipalities where Roma live. The Salvation Army in the Netherlands, with its Youth Protection and Probation Services, also plays an important role in the legal (judicial) system with respect to child protection (for example, a court order to take care of vulnerable Roma children who are arrested for shoplifting, pick-pocketing etc.). We are also involved in an ongoing project together with the Dutch police for minor victims of human trafficking, most of whom are Roma.

«The most important learning point is: work with Roma together with all relevant organisations and the municipality. We have to recognise that inclusion is a long process. We must accept that and show the government what we do and the results we achieve.» The Netherlands

The aim of the project is to offer perspective and a safe development for Roma children as for any other child. We have four targets to achieve this main objective:

- An experience-/evidence-based method of working with Roma
- A training course developed by The Salvation Army Academy for professionals who work with Roma
- The inclusion of key figures from the Roma community in this approach
- A multi-agency approach to work together as key partners with the Roma families

► CHURCH COMMUNITY PROJECTS

Church ministry among Roma, Enschede

The aim is to serve all people and bring them to God. This is work in progress but there is a revival going on amongst Roma people who participate in this municipality. They say farewell to their old lives (criminality etc.) and follow Jesus. Whilst they have no church, they have asked The Salvation Army to facilitate their own worship.

► CHALLENGES

The biggest challenge is the question of inclusion: knowing the best way for Roma to be part of society. There are a lot of barriers coming from the past, such as the fact that Roma were also victims of the Holocaust in the Second World War. Being stateless is a big issue. Without identification documents, you cannot work, rent a home and so on. Roma children often finish school without any qualifications or certificates, which prevents them from entering the labour market.

NORWAY



Respondents: Major Knut Haugsvær and Mr. Simen Mørstad Johansen

The Salvation Army has Roma as beneficiaries and participants in many programmes in many cities in Norway. However, in this report the focus is on the social services provided in three main cities – Oslo, Trondheim and Kristiansand. None of these programmes is specifically targeted at Roma, but at migrants experiencing poverty in general. However, as these programmes are mostly attended by migrating Roma, mainly from Romania, there is an explicit Roma component.

The Salvation Army in Norway also operates one main project in three cities of Romania, in collaboration with The Salvation Army there.

In terms of partnership and collaboration, in Oslo we meet regularly with other NGOs and local authorities. In Trondheim, we have annual dialogue meetings with the City Mission church and the Red Cross. Also in Kristiansand we have close collaboration with other churches and the local authorities. We participate in public debates on the Roma issue, focusing on compassion for vulnerable people, meeting needs of people where they are and finding solutions in their home communities. At an individual level, we have facilitated access to lawyers for some beneficiaries.

In addition to the projects listed below, Roma can also benefit from the following services:

- Safe house – for victims of trafficking (Oslo)
- Laundry services (Trondheim)
- Meal (Oslo and Trondheim)

For more information: www.frelsesarmeen.no

► SOCIAL PROJECTS

Migration Centre with counselling and support programmes, Oslo and Trondheim

At the Migration Centre in Oslo social workers provide care and help to build dignity: providing shower facilities, information about rights in Norway and help to find the best solution for them either in Norway or in their home country. This work started in 2010. This has been developed in two different locations with sanitary facilities, food and outreach at the Harbour Light Contact Centre and food and counselling at the Salvation Army Slum Station in Oslo. The work will be centralised in a new migration centre in autumn 2017.

The Migration Centre Trondheim is a low-threshold programme aimed at providing access to sanitary facilities like showers, toilet, laundry facilities and a hot meal.

Sanitary programme with showers (Oslo, Trondheim, and Kristiansand)

This is a low-threshold programme aimed at providing access to sanitary facilities. We have set up a container with sanitation facilities near the place where most Roma sleep outside.

Winternight – accommodation when below -10 degrees (Oslo and Kristiansand)

This is an emergency service providing accommodation when the experienced temperature is at least -10 Celsius.

Outreach and mapping (Oslo and Kristiansand)

This is a low-threshold programme aimed at providing access to sanitary facilities. We have set up a container with sanitation facilities near the place where most Roma sleep outside.

Community centres with after-school programmes, health clinics and work training opportunities, Bucharest, Iasi and Ploiesti (Romania)

This bilateral project is taking place in three cities: Iasi, Ploiesti and Bucharest. None of the programmes target Roma specifically, however, the main target group in this Norway Grant financed project⁹ is the Roma population (Roma are targeted explicitly but not exclusively). The aim of this project is poverty alleviation and prevention of begging through providing Roma with access to education support, health services and the job market. The project started in August 2014 and will end in April 2017 (the programmes will continue also after the end of the Norway Grants financing period).



⁹-Norway Grant financed project (RO25/03)

The target group are disadvantaged families and our objective is to provide integrated social services in these three domains to the whole family. These include:

- The after-school programme to prevent dropping out of school
- The health station
- Work training at the SalvaJob job programme warehouse and shop in Ploiesti and 2 workshops that sew products for Fretex Redesign in Norway.

Within the project we celebrate the international Roma Day each year on 8th April. At the community centres we have organised sessions on Roma culture, language and history. This has been positively received, especially among the children. Some children have expressed that they are now proud to be Roma, instead of ashamed and hiding their ethnic identity. We have also had some collaboration with the Roma museum and on the 8th of April the community centres have worked together with local Roma NGOs.

For more information:

www.armatasalvarii.ro

www.salvatex.ro

www.frelsesarmeen.no/romania



(Second-hand clothes shop open in Iasi, Romania)

▶ CHALLENGES

Roma face challenges of self-fulfilling negative stereotypes and narrow positive stereotypes – e.g. “they are good musicians” – and discrimination in institutions – e.g. schools. There are few positive stories about Roma identity. The majority of Roma are caught in a cycle of poverty that prevents Roma getting access to fundamental rights – both because of lack of knowledge of rights and also because of discriminatory practices related to anti-gypsyism.

Other challenges include:

- Lack of knowledge about history and culture among both majority and minority populations
- An assimilative culture of integration – lack of cultural equality
- Poverty – lack of access to fundamental rights and living conditions
- Lack of a positive ethnic identity as Roma

RECOMMENDATIONS TO NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

▶ Implement the national Roma Integration Strategy and focus on integrated social services as proposed in the strategy, seeing the needs of housing conditions, education support, health services and work possibilities as an integrated whole.

▶ Develop a programme in all social and educational institutions that creates awareness concerning the mechanisms of poverty and also the history and culture of Roma in Romania and in Europe.

▶ Develop a transnational long-term inclusion strategy focusing on getting migrating Roma in Norway into employment in Romania. This must be combined with a targeted set-up of social enterprises in the communities from where they originate. The government could support the personnel for this transnational vocational programme across borders and support the set-up of the social enterprises. A part of the programme would be mandatory educational programmes in Norway for the participants who get access to jobs in Romania for literacy, parenting and about their fundamental rights within Romanian institutions such as school, health, housing and work.

ROMANIA



Respondent: Major Leanne Ruthven

Apart from local church community work, The Salvation Army runs a new social community centre. The aim of this centre is to provide better conditions for vulnerable, socially and especially economically disadvantaged groups, including the Roma population, who are very limited regarding opportunities and rights in society. They are disadvantaged in terms of access to housing, health services, employment and education. Roma in Romania are often excluded because of poverty, discrimination, culture, tradition and lack of education.

We cooperate with organisations and churches like Concordia Humanitarian Organisation, Cris Association Ploiesti and others. We work together to find solutions for professional training, work placements, exchanges of professional resources, etc. In Craiva we work with Mission without Borders. Our desire, as well as theirs, is to support Roma towards education and spirituality, so they fulfil their potential and are able to manage life in society.

Although there are state-run institutions that offer support and social protection to Roma, local authorities are mostly involved in providing social benefits (allowances, food, etc.) and generally are not involved in social services (teaching and educating children, professional training and providing jobs, safety and shelter etc.). Therefore, they appreciate our contribution in this area.

For more information:

http://web.salvationarmy.org/eet/www_eet_romania.nsf

► SOCIAL PROJECTS

«GENEZA» Social Community Centre, Ploiesti (see Norway for more on this)

The social community centre project started in 2015. From the community centre we do many activities, we worship together, we do homework, we play, we go to museums and the zoo, we take walks in the park, we take trips to the seaside, we play sports, we plant trees, we recycle, we clean, we celebrate together, etc.

Given that the majority of the team involved in the centre's activity are part of The Salvation Army community, we relate to the children (approx. 50) not as beneficiaries of the centre, but, in fact, as our own children. Their parents, their families, are basically our extended family.

► CHURCH COMMUNITY PROJECTS

Besides regular meetings with parents, mothers' meetings or parents' meetings on certain subjects (the value of women, educating children, school for parents, etc.), we organise various celebrations, which are opportunities to hear the gospel and to challenge decision-making.



These activities usually take place in the corps (church) hall, but we also took the opportunity to celebrate the International Roma Day, in order to be part of their community in one of the neighbourhoods predominantly populated by Roma. We also make visits to their homes and have personal conversations.

Craiova Corps, Romania

- After-school programme (Mathematics, Romanian, English)
- Back to School for 15 children (5 families)
- Product support for families
- Activities for children and youngsters (Children's Club, Sports, Young Salvationists' Café, Computer Classes, Guitar, Music, Choir)
- Soup Run for homeless (4 days a week)
- Hygiene and washing facilities for homeless

The aim of these social activities is to integrate everybody into society in terms of education, personal development and preparing for the future. We try to run a project for a period between 1-3 years, to have continuity, stability and results. The support has given the children courage and helped them integrate into a society that discriminates against this group. Some have been able to go to college and some were able to finish school. Homeless people became more respectful and willing to help others.

«We see that children who joined the after-school programmes and children's clubs have better results in school and ambition for their future. Children from Roma families feel confident to go to school and are ready to dare for a better future. Homeless people feel a bit like 'normal people'.»

► CHALLENGES

Some of the major challenges Roma in Romania face are illiteracy, lack of housing, supporting large families, lack of medical care, lack of parental counselling, poverty and discrimination. The lack of employment opportunities is a real challenge. Few opportunities for employment mean that they see their only options are to go abroad begging or to sell their daughters for prostitution. The lack of education, schooling and professional training received by Roma has also contributed to this situation.

From this point of view, we must have the wisdom to be inspired by traditions and cultures and, as for other ethnic groups, allow for its development and evolution. To have a nomadic lifestyle is part of some Roma cultures, but at the

same time it requires some special qualities, like adaptability and flexibility, which can be developed in order to cope with uncertain situations of the times that we live in.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

- Projects for centres specifically tailored to help Roma integrate
- Support the creation of mini-farms and social enterprises for Roma
- Support and cooperation with civil society working with Roma.



SLOVAKIA



Respondent: Captain Vitalie Chiriac

In Slovakia, The Salvation Army has been developing six Roma projects under corps (church) leadership that are interconnected. It means that these are not only independent social services, but these activities are included in our corps ministries and programmes. We do not label our work as “Roma clubs and Roma churches”, but rather we want to be open to serve everyone. However, we minister in a Roma environment, so we also adjust our ministry to the needs of the Roma community.

In terms of partnerships, we have working meetings with a Governmental Envoy for the Roma minority and with the director of the development department. We are at the stage of looking for possibilities of mutual cooperation; however, we are in the regions where EU funding is not easily obtainable.

For more information: www.armadaspasy.sk



with one woman and one man from the settlement for various support work.

After school education/tutorage, Plavecký Štvrtok and Galanta

The aim of this project is to improve school attendance, providing Salvation Army after-school programmes directly after their classes finish at primary and elementary school. The goal of this programme together with Roma assistants is to help children catch up with previous lessons, to provide school materials and eventually help them with current lessons and homework.

As a result of this work we see the improvement of results at school and the children achieving better marks. It is also important to find out why a child is not learning well and to cooperate with the teacher. When the school and teacher recognise that somebody is supporting a child, they change their attitude positively, particularly in the case of Roma children, or children from socially disadvantaged families.

«Chance for work» and «Volunteers», Plavecký Štvrtok

The aim of this project is to help to Roma start and maintain good working habits, with employment and related psycho-social support. We help people learn how to face difficult situations such as debt repayments or property seizures. This project is run by the Labour Office (LO) at national level and The Salvation Army is a partner.

Community Centre, PEZINOK

«The agreement with the town council is unique because Roma people are also active partners. They do not play only a passive part, obeying rules, orders and requirements. They are partners, without whom this project would be impossible to run.»

The aim of this project is to construct a building and create a place for operating programmes for children and youth and a space for The Salvation Army corps (church) and various social ministries. Services planned include a club for pre-school children, after-school education, a club for teenagers and elderly people, a Bible study (group) and Sunday worship services.

An agreement has been signed between the local municipality of Pezinok, The Salvation Army and the representatives of the Roma family members from the settlement to cooperate on various service developments. The Salvation Army is building the community centre and the town of Pezinok will provide finances for energy and the water supply. The representatives of Roma families agreed to cooperate with this centre practically, sending children to clubs and keeping the property around the settlement clean.

▶ INTEGRATED SOCIAL AND CHURCH COMMUNITY PROJECTS

Club for pre-school children, of Plavecký Štvrtok

This club for pre-school children is for ages 3-5 years in a settlement with over 600 people, next to the town of Plavecký Štvrtok. The goal of this project is to help Roma children so they can start the 1st grade at school at the same level as the other children without major problems and have good opportunities for personal development and further education.

This programme is running thanks to the partnership with the Regional Labour Office (RLO), which provides subsidies for unemployed people under the scheme “Chance for work” and “Grants for volunteer work”. The Salvation Army receives a subsidy from RLO to employ four women from the settlement as Roma teaching assistants, together

«We want to use this programme as a pilot to be replicated in other villages and towns with Roma settlements.»

Children's club, Galanta

Through this project we aim to improve child development in general. These Roma children are more advanced in their education than children from settlements, but are still behind in terms of personal development. The club programme focuses on skills-building and development, communication, memorising, general knowledge, art, music and drama. Regular Bible reading and text discussion, with prayers for each other, is part of the programme. The children perform what they have learned during the previous week at the Sunday service and their parents come to see them in action. Thus parents are also involved in the running of the club and after a while some integrate into the church community.

Day Centre Bratislava (not exclusively targeting Roma)

The aim of this project is to provide a place during the day for people without shelter, to help them with administrative tasks and issues of accommodation. We also provide support with job-seeking as well as spiritual support.

«The Salvation Army project has inspired and encouraged the town leadership and local social workers. Before this project started, the town municipality decided to stop giving any money and support for the Roma settlement. They lost hope for improvement and change, and the town gave up. Nobody knew what to do with Roma in the settlement and nobody had faith for the situation to turn around. The Salvation Army vision helped to awaken their hopes.»

► CHURCH COMMUNITY PROJECTS

Corps ministries with Roma in Bratislava, Plavecký Štvrtok, Pezinok and Galanta

The aim of this project is to provide a place during the day for people without shelter, to help them with administrative tasks and issues of accommodation. We also provide support with job-seeking as well as spiritual support.

► CHALLENGES

It is often a challenge to communicate to Roma the long-term importance and need to educate their children. If Roma people are educated, they will have their own lawyers, doctors and politicians and this will change their position in society and also they will be viewed differently. We try to encourage Roma to think in the long-term, in particular in terms of managing their finances.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

Do not be afraid to publicly support those who want to make a change and do something.

Help to change public opinion about the people who are supporting Roma inclusion.



SWEDEN



Response by Larisa Lacatus (National Contact Person)

The Salvation Army in Sweden does not have specific projects targeting only Roma. We are addressing the basic needs of the vulnerable Roma migrants from Romania and Bulgaria through our social centres for homeless people in different cities in Sweden, in particular through the EU Centres (social centres addressing the migrants' needs) in Stockholm and Gothenburg. At the EU Centres we employ personnel with a Roma background and experience in working with Roma inclusion in Romania and Sweden.

Our general social services and church-based services (particularly in the city of Alingsås) are visited by a number of Roma. We also have a centre called Vinter and Sommernight för EU-Citizens in Stockholm (Västberga) that is visited by a number of Roma.

We carry out advocacy and awareness-raising actions to promote Roma rights. We are also on the board of IOP for working EU migrants in the city of Stockholm to find the most effective ways to give practical help and support to Roma people and EU migrants in need.

For more information:
www.fralsningsarmen.se/Verksamhet
www.facebook.com/FAEUcenter

► SOCIAL PROJECTS

'Famnen' – EU Centre for EU-mobile citizens and undocumented migrants, Gothenburg

This centre aims to cater for basic needs (food, personal hygiene, clothes, washing of clothes, finding accommodation, etc.) of EU-mobile citizens and undocumented migrants. We also have special health information activities for homeless migrant Roma women.

Upon arrival, both undocumented migrants and EU-mobile citizens need Swedish education, community (a social network) and support to find work. The aim is that The Salvation Army can ease difficult situations for these specific groups by providing information about Swedish society, rights, etc., in various languages. However, we need more internal and external cooperation, both in Sweden, to gain more knowledge about the groups, and in the EU citizens' home countries, to provide support and assistance there and as well as working against prejudice and racism against Roma.

The EU Centre is a project in partnership with the municipality. The average number of people who visit the centre every month is 1,669 persons.

► CHALLENGES

Roma suffer from a lack of political representation and very low levels of education. In Sweden at this moment we have settled and well established Roma (Swedish Roma with Swedish citizenship as well as Roma migrants). Their situations are different but what both the groups have in common is poverty, lack of education and vocational training, anti-gypsyism and unemployment. All Roma in this situation are at high risk for being involved in criminal networks, being exploited and becoming addicted to drugs/alcohol.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

More cooperation with all the non-governmental organisations, including The Salvation Army, on different levels.



SWITZERLAND



In Switzerland, the Roma work is integrated into the corps (church) activities and social projects stem from there, including the Social Office in Renens and two corps (churches): Malleray Corps and Lausanne Corps. In 2014, a National Roma Task Force was formed with a group made up of Salvation Army corps officers and employees who now meet five times a year. They share their experiences of helping Roma and discuss their respective projects and how to ensure a holistic approach to helping Roma in Switzerland.

Many Roma in Switzerland come from Romania, therefore the Task Force is looking to set up a project between The Salvation Army in Switzerland and The Salvation Army in Romania, with support for developing an exchange of experience.

In Lausanne and Malleray we are collaborating with the social services from our region and with other organisations that are involved in social services relating to migration. We also work with other NGOs to support advocacy actions promoting the rights of Roma in Switzerland.

For more information:

www.heilsarmee.ch (German)

www.armeduslut.ch (French)



We have developed this programme thanks to good collaboration with the association “Opre Rom” and as a result of this work we see a decrease in legal problems of Roma during their stay in the country. We have also participated with “Opre Rom” in several special events, such as the International Roma Day. Together with the association “San Egidio” we also try to find flats for the families with young children who could then go to school.

Coffee distribution, Lausanne Corps (church)

We distribute coffee and tea to create relationships and give support to Roma. We reach around 100 people a month with good support from volunteers. We see a positive connection between Roma from different parts of Romania.

Corps Emergency Shelter, Malleray Corps (church)

This project aims to give immediate emergency support for Roma in Switzerland. In particular, we provide help during the winter for those who are looking for work, pregnant women or families with young babies and people with a precarious health situation. We provide a clothes-washing service, showers and accommodation in a secure environment to help people to establish contacts with the services available for them in Swiss society. Sometimes we distribute food in collaboration with the organisation “Table couvre-toi” and also distribute clothes in collaboration with the second-hand shop of Moutier Corps (church). We provide support for Roma job seekers looking to integrate themselves in the country’s system. We try to help Roma understand the legal system in Switzerland. We also collaborate with the local police to know if we can continue assisting a person or if there is a risk of human trafficking.

«We have got to know a lot of Roma begging in our town. Each one of them has a story and many problems. We learned about their life in Switzerland and in Romania. Everywhere they suffer from discrimination. Most of them have a big family living in small villages and in poor conditions. They are teaching us gratitude for God’s providence.»

► SOCIAL AND CHURCH COMMUNITY PROJECTS

Friday meal, Lausanne Corps (church)

We provide a weekly hot meal and a place to stay and rest during lunchtime, to connect with each other and to build relationships. This helps us to develop good relationships with Roma. Roma come irregularly to this programme, so we have to adapt ourselves to their lifestyle.

Medical assistance office and clothes distribution, Lausanne Corps (church)

The aim of this project is to assist people with the purchase of medicine and with medical appointments and to provide preventative support for women and family planning. Many Roma people have been helped to improve their health; young women have learnt to be aware of the danger of non-assisted pregnancy and to take better care of themselves with sexual education, etc. A voluntary nurse from The Salvation Army runs this project. During the winter, blankets, sleeping bags and clothes are distributed.

Administrative and legal support in collaboration with “Opre Rom”, Lausanne Corps (church)

Through this project we aim to help Roma with general integration into Switzerland, such as knowing their right to work and the legal structure in Switzerland and dealing with the papers for residence in the country. We also help them to make contact with relatives and help them to pay bills, such as fines or taxes.

Emergency shelter programme “Un toit pour toi”, Malleray

This is a project carried out in collaboration with the Baptist Church. The project has a villa with five rooms in which we can shelter either families or single men or women. The period of stay is three months, which is the legal (visa) period that a person can be in the territory as a tourist.

This project was initially started to help Roma who want to integrate into Swiss society to have the opportunity to find work legally and obtain the papers for residence in Switzerland. French language classes are available in collaboration with another church in the village (Eglise pour Christ).

The Social Services Office of the Salvation Army, Renens

This project has the principle aim of providing emergency social support. We help many Roma with food vouchers, administrative assistance, information about the labour market in Switzerland, vouchers for The Salvation Army second-hand shop (clothes, blankets, dishes) and help to return to their country of origin. The purpose of this office is to offer emergency help rather than finding long-term solutions for Roma.

Coffee & Tea Bar, Malleray Corps (church)

This is open for Roma but also for all who need personal contact and someone to listen to them and their concerns. It consists of a programme of free coffee and tea, with the possibility to speak and pray with someone. We aim to build bridges with Roma and non-Roma persons with the aim of finding solutions to help them. For some of them we have been able to offer medical help, for others we wrote CVs to help them find work, for others we explained the legal conditions for their residence in Switzerland.

Community Meal, Malleray Corps (church)

The aim of this project is to offer a hot meal to the poor, lonely or marginalised persons who need social contact and fellowship. Roma and non-Roma persons are welcome in this programme. We prepare and serve hot meals in the Salvation Army hall and spend time with people, offering counselling and prayer.



Worship meetings for Roma, Lausanne

We hold a worship meeting in partnership with an association called “La Maison du Père”. The numbers are growing and Roma have begun to create their own worship group according to their own musical tradition. Many of the Roma come from Romania, so we translate the service for them.

▶ CHALLENGES

The key challenges we see are integration through employment, housing, education, health, discrimination and language barriers.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

- ▶ Eliminate the barriers of prejudice that still exist towards the Roma population through socialisation programmes and intercultural activities.
- ▶ Develop a positive image of Roma through meetings between Roma groups and authorities and discussions about ways of collaboration and building bridges.
- ▶ Present and make known the history of Roma and the discrimination they have suffered.
- ▶ Invest in Roma mediators.



Respondent: Major Kathryn Blowers (National Contact Person)



► SOCIAL AND CHURCH COMMUNITY PROJECTS

Social Centres (Church Expressions)

There are four expressions of The Salvation Army which specifically target Roma people in four towns. Within these expressions there are a variety of different programmes. These expressions use the Czech, Slovak and Roma languages. However, as church expressions we would never say we are a "Roma" corps (church), but a corps that is open to all. In each location there is offered social support/help for a variety of needs including translation, help in finding doctors, schools, hospital visits, etc. In Margate there is a specific day when the corps is open as a drop-in centre for these enquiries. The other centres work on an appointment system and word of mouth. There is a programme for homeless people in Margate, serving soup and offering showers. This is not targeting Roma, but is run by Roma, for whoever is homeless. So far they have helped people of many different races, but no homeless Roma.

There are four expressions of worship in Margate, Chatham, Gravesend and Dover. The aim is for the salvation of people, building discipleship of Jesus Christ and planting churches. These church expressions include house groups and small group meetings, Bible study, discipleship class, children's ministry, youth ministry, prayer meetings, training for ministry, evangelism, etc.

We are well known to the local government, police and hospitals and they come to us when there are issues or they need advice on reaching into the community. We do not have any outside funding. We are also represented on the National Churches Council for Roma, Gypsy and Travellers.

For more information: www.salvationarmy.org.uk



RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE EU

▶ Be aware that integration is a long process and needs a long-term approach.

▶ Always ensure that the opinions and competences of Roma are taken into account in all inclusion projects – Roma people must be part of the process not just spectators.

▶ Focus Roma inclusion on the needs and issues, rather than the Roma group.

▶ Ensure EU funding for not only research, statistics and reports, but also for supporting Roma with practical help, upscaling good practice, mediators and cultural workers.

▶ Provide EU-funds for Roma inclusion across Europe, including migrating Roma.

▶ Encourage Member States to engage Roma representatives and mediators to support Roma inclusion.

▶ Address and improve poor living conditions.

▶ Support solutions and ways out of over-indebtedness.

▶ Support the construction of social housing that could be managed by NGOs (local authorities are afraid to have more responsibilities for the maintenance and have legal concerns based on their previous experiences).

▶ Ensure better monitoring in regard to the funds granted for Roma inclusion and the implementation of national strategies.

▶ Ensure civil society (including The Salvation Army) is invited to engage in National Roma Platforms and the implementation of the national strategies in close cooperation with the NCPs.

▶ Ensure Member States establish concrete targets and indicators for Roma education, housing, health and employment as part of a new EU Framework from 2020.





CONTACT US

34, Place du Nouveau Marché aux Grains
B 1000 Brussels • Belgium
Tél: 02/274 10 56 /59
Fax: 02/513 81 49
Email: IHQ-EUOffice@Salvationarmy.org

www.salvationarmy.org/euaffairs

INTERNATIONAL MISSION STATEMENT

The Salvation Army, an international movement,
is an evangelical part of the universal Christian Church.

Its **message** is based on the Bible.

Its **ministry** is motivated by the love of God.

Its **mission** is to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ
and to meet human needs in his name without discrimination.

