

# 4 keys to successful Roma inclusion

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There is no one-size-fits-all when it comes to local inclusion but four key elements can boost the chances of success, finds the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights' latest report.

“Roma are subject to persistent discrimination, marginalisation and are shunned by society,” says FRA Director [Michael O’Flaherty](#). “To break the cycle of poverty borne out of such exclusion, Roma need to be fully involved and fully engaged in any integration efforts that target them.”

The [Working with Roma: Participation and empowerment of local communities](#) report draws on lessons learnt from Roma participation in local integration activities in [21 places across 11 Member States](#). They covered such activities as local housing, education and employment.

Looking across all activities, four key success factors emerge:

1. **Participation:** Roma should be meaningfully engaged in projects and policies from start to end. This includes agreeing on specific goals and outcomes, and addressing issues that meet people’s needs, such as adequate housing, education, and jobs. They should also have a real role in decision-making and jointly creating the change they want to achieve.
2. **Trust:** As Roma communities and local authorities are often frustrated after repeated efforts that result in little progress, building trust is vital. When planning new activities, focusing on previous successful projects and trusted local authorities, community members and networks who are willing to help also improves success.
3. **Communications:** Clear, accessible and targeted communications about aims, what participation actually means, as well as project budgets and whether participation is voluntary or paid, can create real understanding and buy-in of inclusion efforts. It also helps manage expectations. In addition, taking time to support people to properly engage and voice opinions can lead to more sustainable commitments.
4. **Community relations:** It is important to know the different relationships within local communities when planning projects. This ensures people who can champion the project are fully on board. It helps to address interests that are shared by Roma and non-Roma alike, such as housing or employment. Allowing all sides to engage in respectful dialogue with local authorities can also improve the chances of success.

The report also contains lessons for future projects and policies. These include granting enough time for the four keys to work and situating local integration efforts in wider social inclusion projects to ensure sustainability. It also underlines the importance of being flexible and adapting to specific local needs when designing and running projects.

The report stemmed from FRA's research on the [barriers to and drivers for successful investment in Roma inclusion](#). This was needed in order to develop and monitor the implementation of measures related to national and European policies for Roma inclusion.

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