



OPEN SOCIETY
FOUNDATIONS

Open Society Public Health Program

The Open Society Public Health Program envisions a society committed to inclusion, human rights, and justice, in which health-related laws, policies, and practices reflect these values and are based on evidence. The Program works to advance the health and human rights of marginalized persons by building the capacity of civil society leaders and organizations and advocating for accountability and a strong civil society role in health policy and practice.

Roma Health Project

As part of the Open Society Public Health Program, the **Roma Health Project** adheres to this vision and mission with a focus on advancing the health and health-related rights of Roma persons, who regularly experience discrimination and human rights violations and have unequal and inequitable access to health care as a result of their ethnicity and social exclusion.

The Roma Health Project pursues these goals and objectives through both grantmaking and operational efforts, including fostering activists' leadership, capacity building of civil society organizations, and advocacy. The Roma Health Project does not fund health services or health education activities. Its geographic mandate covers primarily: Bulgaria, Macedonia, Romania, Serbia, and Slovakia and to a lesser extent, Ukraine.

In order to achieve its mission, the Roma Health Project has defined four strategic goals:

1. Building the capacity of Roma NGOs to address health-related issues

The Roma Health Project strives to build the capacity of Roma civil society leaders and organizations to engage in health policy advocacy at a local, national, and regional level. Activities supported under this goal include: organizational development of Roma NGOs working on health and health-related rights; development of strategic communication and advocacy potential of Roma NGOs capable of and interested in effective health advocacy; development of a new generation of Roma harm reduction leaders, etc.

2. Combating discrimination faced by Roma in accessing and receiving health care

The Roma Health Project endeavors to support better use of legal tools aiming to advance the health and rights of Roma and to combat related discrimination. Activities that fall within this area include: support to key Roma NGOs in developing effective strategy for addressing discrimination of Roma in health care settings by using adequate domestic and international legal remedies; support to Roma paralegal schemes, etc.

3. Supporting the development and implementation of health-related laws, policies, and practices that ensure just and equitable treatment for Roma

The Roma Health Project supports efforts directed towards addressing systematic barriers faced by Roma in health care settings. It supports Roma NGOs who actively engage in policy discussions with the authorities and strive to ensure that Roma voices are included in decision-making processes. Activities that fall within this area include: support of activities aimed at securing greater involvement of Roma in health-related policy discussions; strengthening of health mediation programs; organizational development support for harm reduction NGOs that strive to advance the health and rights of Roma drug users, etc.

4. Holding authorities accountable for their responsibilities to Roma under local, regional, national, and international health-related laws and policies

Activities that fall within this area include: efforts to keep governments accountable for their commitments regarding Roma health within the context of the Decade of Roma Inclusion; EU-level health-related advocacy; monitoring of governments commitments related to Roma health, etc.