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# Activity 3.2 Intervention Mechanism for tackling Dropouts of Roma learners.

Intervention Mechanism Guidebook



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# Intervention Mechanism Guidebook

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## CONTENTS

Acronyms and Abbreviations	4
1. Introduction	5
Purpose of the guidebook	5
Target Audience	5
Project Context	5
2. Understanding the Needs of Roma Learners – causes of dropouts	6
Introduction	6
Socioeconomic factors	6
Cultural factors	6
3. Intervention Strategies	7
Legal and Institutional Framework	7
Existing Strategies	8
Suggested Strategies	10
4. Conclusion	15
5. References	17
6. Annexes	19
ANNEX I: Early Warning and Monitoring System Operationalization Monitoring Component C: Socio-Economic Vulnerability Index (SEVI)	19
ANNEX II: Early Warning and Monitoring System Operationalization Monitoring Component D: Behavioral Incident Monitor	20
ANNEX III: Early Warning and Monitoring System Operationalization Monitoring Component E: Teacher Alert System	21
ANNEX IV: Early Warning and Monitoring System Operationalization Monitoring Component E: Outcome and Retention Index	22



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## Acronyms and Abbreviations

EACEA	European Education and Culture Executive Agency
ECVET	The European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training
EU	European Union
EQUAVET	European Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training
LTTA	Learning, Teaching and Training Activities
PQM	Project Quality Management
TPM	Transnational Project Meeting
QC	Quality Control
QA	Quality Assurance
VET	Vocational education and training
WP	Work package



# 1. Introduction

## PURPOSE OF THE GUIDEBOOK

This guidebook is designed to assist educators, vocational trainers, social workers, Roma mediators and community leaders in addressing the issue of dropouts of Roma youth learners. Roma communities throughout Europe encounter significant barriers to education and vocational training, including discrimination, poverty, and social exclusion. These challenges stem from deeply rooted historical exclusion, systemic discrimination, and economic hardship, leading to high dropout rates and limited opportunities for long-term socioeconomic advancement (Kóczé et al., 2019). Without targeted interventions, Roma learners face an increased risk of educational disengagement, reinforcing cycles of poverty and marginalization (OECD, 2021).

Addressing these dropout rates requires a structured and evidence-based approach that considers the diverse sociocultural and economic realities of Roma learners. This guidebook presents an intervention mechanism that integrates assessment, planning, implementation, and policy sustainability to reduce dropout rates among Roma learners in VET programs. By drawing on best practices and academic research, it provides a framework for identifying the root causes of dropouts and implementing targeted, culturally responsive solutions. Sustainable interventions necessitate institutional commitment, cross-sectoral collaboration, and inclusive policy frameworks that prioritize Roma education as an integral component of national educational strategies (FRA, 2019).

## TARGET AUDIENCE

This guidebook is intended for professionals and stakeholders engaged in the education, vocational training, and social inclusion of Roma learners. Key audiences include:

- Educators and trainers in both formal and non-formal educational settings,
- Vocational education providers,
- Social workers, Roma mediators and community leaders,
- NGOs and organizations dedicated to Roma inclusion,
- Policymakers focused on enhancing educational equity for marginalized groups.

## PROJECT CONTEXT

The development of this guidebook is part of the broader MIRANDA project, co-funded by the European Union. MIRANDA aims to promote social inclusion through vocational education and training (VET) pathways specifically tailored for Roma learners. The project addresses the unique needs of Roma communities by providing customized educational support, fostering empowerment, and creating employment pathways. This guidebook represents one of several tools designed to achieve MIRANDA's objectives in supporting Roma learners throughout their educational journeys while promoting their active participation in society.

Aligning with the goals of the MIRANDA project, this guidebook aims to investigate the structural, cultural, and economic barriers contributing to Roma dropout rates, analyze existing support mechanisms for minority education, and propose intervention strategies backed by empirical evidence



and case studies. It provides educators and stakeholders with strategies for cultivating an inclusive learning environment that respects cultural diversity and fosters success for all students, regardless of their background.

## 2. Understanding the Needs of Roma Learners – causes of dropouts

### INTRODUCTION

Roma learners across Europe encounter a multifaceted array of challenges that significantly impede their participation in quality education and vocational training. A primary barrier is the pervasive discrimination and prejudice faced by Roma communities, which often results in social exclusion and limited educational opportunities. According to recent reports, dropout rates among Roma students range between 31% (Greece) and can reach as high as 70% (Bulgaria) compared to 9.7% for their non-Roma peers, highlighting the severity of the educational inequalities they face. Many Roma learners grow up in conditions of poverty, characterised by inadequate housing, healthcare, and access to educational resources, all of which adversely affect their academic success.

### SOCIOECONOMIC FACTORS

#### **Societal Marginalization and Discrimination**

The Roma communities have historically faced systemic exclusion across Europe. Various reports (e.g., ERRC, 2020) highlight cases of educational segregation, where Roma students are disproportionately placed in special needs schools. Additionally, subtle discrimination from teachers and peers can lead to lower academic self-esteem and motivation. Language barriers also play a significant role; many Roma learners may not be fluent in the dominant language of their country, hindering their ability to engage fully in the learning process.

#### **Economic Pressures and Child Labour**

Many Roma families rely on informal labour markets, often involving their children in small-scale trading or domestic work. Research by the European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC, 2018) shows that nearly 30% of Roma youth engage in work activities that interfere with their education. The absence of strong social support networks exacerbates their vulnerability.

Studies show that economic hardship forces many Roma students to leave school early to support their families. The lack of long-term employment opportunities for Roma parents contributes to an unstable household income, further pressuring young students to abandon their studies. A survey conducted by the Austrian Institute for Research on Education and Training (2021) found that 47% of Roma youth who dropped out cited financial strain as their primary reason for leaving school.

### CULTURAL FACTORS

Roma social norms often dictate forced early marriages, early family formation and gender-specific roles. Studies indicate that Roma girls face greater educational discontinuity due to early marriage



expectations. A 2020 survey by the Open Society Foundations found that 35% of Roma girls drop out before completing secondary school due to familial expectations of marriage and domestic responsibilities.

Moreover, distrust in state institutions, including schools, plays a significant role in Roma families' reluctance to engage with the formal education system. Historical experiences of discrimination and forced assimilation policies have contributed to a generational skepticism toward educational authorities. Furthermore, the absence of role models in education and employment can limit aspirations and motivation among Roma youth to pursue higher education or vocational training.

### 3. Intervention Strategies

To ensure that Roma learners can access and succeed in education and vocational training, a comprehensive set of intervention policies and services is essential. These services provide both academic and non-academic assistance, addressing the barriers that Roma learners face while promoting their success in diverse learning environments.

#### LEGAL AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

Roma access to education in Europe remains a pressing issue marked by systemic exclusion, despite EU legal protections and national commitments. In Germany, Greece, Austria, Bulgaria (EU Member States), and North Macedonia (EU candidate country), legal and institutional frameworks differ in design and implementation but are aligned with the broader objectives of the EU Roma Strategic Framework (2020–2030) and the Racial Equality Directive (2000/43/EC).

**Germany** does not have a centralized education policy due to its federal structure; responsibilities lie with the *Länder* (federal states). While discrimination is prohibited under the General Equal Treatment Act (AGG), implementation varies. Roma and Sinti (recognized as a national minority) still face indirect exclusion through language barriers and socioeconomic disadvantage. There is no nationwide strategy specifically targeting Roma in education, but *Länder*-level integration programs (e.g., intercultural mediators, language support) exist. Germany's National Roma Integration Strategy (NRIS) lacks binding educational targets and has been criticized for limited Roma participation.

**Greece** recognizes Roma as a vulnerable social group rather than a minority, which shapes its policies. Although the right to education is guaranteed under the Greek Constitution and the Racial Equality Directive has been transposed, implementation suffers from structural shortcomings. Roma children often attend segregated schools or face enrolment obstacles due to a lack of documentation or stable housing. Greece's updated Roma inclusion strategy (2021–2030) includes education as a core pillar and is partially funded through the ESF+, yet effective enforcement and anti-segregation measures remain inconsistent.

**North Macedonia**, as an EU candidate country, aligns with EU standards through its National Roma Integration Strategy (2014–2020, extended to 2030). Roma are constitutionally recognized as an ethnic minority, and the Law on Primary and Secondary Education guarantees free and compulsory education. The country has shown notable progress, including scholarships, Roma teaching assistants, and quota-based access to higher education. However, dropout rates and low preschool enrolment persist, often driven by poverty and discrimination. EU pre-accession funds (IPA) support targeted education programs.



**Austria** recognizes Roma as a national minority, with constitutional protections and anti-discrimination laws (Equal Treatment Act). Education policy is centralized but struggles with systemic inequalities. Roma students often face challenges related to language acquisition, lack of cultural inclusion, and underrepresentation. Austria's NRIS focuses broadly on integration and has been criticized for vague educational goals and insufficient Roma community involvement in policy design.

**Bulgaria** has the largest Roma population proportionally in the EU. It has implemented several Roma inclusion strategies since 2005, with education as a key focus. Legal guarantees exist under the Protection Against Discrimination Act and Public Education Act, yet school segregation remains widespread, especially in rural and impoverished areas. Roma children are overrepresented in under-resourced or "Roma-only" schools. The 2021–2030 Strategy aims to tackle these issues, but progress is undermined by weak enforcement, political instability, and insufficient funding.

**Conclusion:** While all five countries have legal protections against educational discrimination and have adopted national Roma strategies, implementation remains uneven. Germany and Austria emphasize indirect inclusion through mainstream programs, while Bulgaria and North Macedonia employ more targeted policies. Greece lags in addressing segregation. Across all states, the effectiveness of Roma educational access depends not just on legal frameworks but on enforcement, resource allocation, and meaningful Roma participation in policymaking.

## EXISTING STRATEGIES

Access to vocational education and training (VET) is vital for improving employment outcomes among Roma populations across Europe. While all five countries have general VET systems, targeted measures for Roma are uneven and often project-based rather than structural. Nonetheless, several focused strategies—especially those funded or guided by the EU—have emerged to bridge the skills gap and reduce labour market exclusion.

### Germany

Germany's **dual education system**, combining in-company training with vocational school, is a well-established pathway to employment. However, Roma—particularly migrant Roma—face significant barriers such as language proficiency, legal status, and lack of prior qualifications. Focused strategies include:

- **Local integration projects** supported by the European Social Fund (ESF), offering **vocational orientation, language courses, and apprenticeship placement** support for marginalized groups, including Roma.
- Initiatives like "**Integration through Qualification**" (IQ) aim to upskill migrants and marginalized groups, including Roma from EU member states like Bulgaria and Romania, but do not explicitly target Roma in official terms.
- The **lack of targeted, nation-wide Roma VET programs** is a challenge, particularly as Roma are often lumped under broader migrant or low-skilled categories.

### Greece

Greece has a centralized VET system, but Roma-specific initiatives remain **limited and sporadic**:



- EU-funded pilot programs such as “**Roma Inclusion through Education and Work**” (2017–2020) sought to connect Roma youth with VET programs and job placements, using **mediators and local mentorship**.
- Roma learners are underrepresented in formal VET schools (EPAL and IEK), and dropout rates are high due to socioeconomic instability.
- The 2021–2030 **National Roma Strategy** acknowledges the need to improve VET access but lacks a dedicated implementation mechanism so far.
- Some **NGO-led initiatives** work in partnership with municipalities to offer **short-term skills training** in areas like construction, caregiving, and tailoring.

### North Macedonia

As an EU candidate country, North Macedonia has shown a comparatively stronger focus on Roma VET inclusion:

- The **Roma Education Fund (REF)** collaborates with the government to offer **scholarships, mentoring, and job-readiness training** for Roma in secondary and post-secondary VET.
- The government’s **Operational Plan for Employment** includes **subsidized internships, wage subsidies, and vocational requalification programs** targeting vulnerable groups, with Roma as a key demographic.
- The 2021–2030 Roma Strategy prioritizes **active labour market measures**, including VET for youth and women, and sets specific indicators for Roma participation.
- EU’s **IPA II and IPA III funds** are used to develop **inclusive training centres** and **vocational guidance services** targeting Roma communities.

### Austria

Austria’s dual VET system is inclusive in theory, but has **no Roma-specific national VET strategy**:

- Roma are included under “**disadvantaged youth**” in employment and training programs funded by ESF+ and the **Public Employment Service (AMS)**.
- Municipal-level projects in cities like Vienna and Burgenland (home to Austria’s Roma minority) offer **language training, digital skills courses, and career counselling** with a cultural mediation component.
- NGOs and Roma organizations (e.g., **Romano Centro**) have been involved in **transition-to-work support**, often acting as intermediaries with training institutions.
- **Structural barriers**—including stigma, early school leaving, and lack of employer incentives—still limit access.

### Bulgaria

Bulgaria has implemented **the most explicit Roma-targeted VET strategies**, although outcomes remain mixed:

- Under the **National Roma Integration Strategy (2012–2020)** and its successor (2021–2030), Bulgaria committed to integrating Roma youth into VET through:
  - **Career counselling in Roma-majority schools**



- **Scholarships and transport subsidies** for students enrolled in VET
- Targeted support for **Roma girls and early school leavers**
- EU Structural Funds have supported **VET school modernization** and **public-private training partnerships** in high Roma population areas (e.g., Plovdiv, Sliven).
- Pilot programs such as “**Your Future is in Your Hands**” and “**Together for a Better Education**” have linked vocational schools with employers in agriculture, textiles, and services.
- Challenges remain with **segregated VET tracks**, low quality of training in Roma-dominated areas, and weak labour market absorption.

Among the five countries, **North Macedonia and Bulgaria** stand out for implementing targeted Roma VET strategies with measurable goals and donor support. **Germany and Austria** rely on inclusive frameworks with indirect targeting, while **Greece** lags in systematizing Roma VET access. Across all cases, Roma-focused VET initiatives are often project-based, and their sustainability hinges on stronger state ownership, Roma participation, and employer engagement.

## SUGGESTED STRATEGIES

Roma youth still face considerable barriers to completing vocational education and entering the labour market. High dropout rates, stemming from financial difficulties, lack of engagement, and a disconnect between educational content and employment opportunities, represent significant challenges. To effectively reduce dropout rates among Roma youth aged 15 and older, countries must adopt targeted, concrete interventions that address both the systemic issues within the education system and the specific socio-economic barriers that Roma families face. The following strategies are proposed to create meaningful change, based on the unique needs of Roma students and grounded in current policies and practices.

### 1. Early Warning and Monitoring System (EWMS) for Preventing Roma Dropout from VET Programs

The Early Warning and Monitoring System (EWMS) is a preventive mechanism designed to systematically identify and support Roma learners at risk of dropping out of vocational education and training (VET) programs. Rooted in evidence-based risk indicators and supported by institutional coordination, the EWMS functions as a data-driven and human-centred intervention tool operating at the school level. It is embedded within the administrative and pedagogical framework of VET institutions, with specific attention to the socio-economic and cultural vulnerabilities of Roma students.

At its core, the EWMS collects and analyses student-level data across four dimensions: attendance, academic performance, behavioural records, and social risk factors. Attendance tracking systems are configured to detect patterns of absenteeism or chronic lateness, which are frequently early indicators of disengagement. Academic performance is monitored through continuous assessment scores and formative evaluations, highlighting learners falling behind in key vocational and general subjects. Behavioural data, including disciplinary referrals or isolation within the classroom environment, are reviewed in conjunction with teacher observations and guidance counsellor input. Social risk factors, such as unstable housing, poverty, family responsibilities, and exposure to discrimination, are identified through confidential student interviews, Roma mediator reports, and family outreach efforts.



Once risk thresholds are met in any one or more of these dimensions, the EWMS generates an automated alert within the school's monitoring system. This alert triggers a multidisciplinary response coordinated by a designated dropout prevention team, which typically includes a Roma education mediator, a career counsellor, a class teacher, and, where available, a school psychologist. The team initiates an individual case review and develops a support plan tailored to the learner's needs. Support measures may include academic tutoring, attendance incentives, flexible scheduling, mental health services, or engagement with the learner's family.

To ensure accountability and continuity, the system integrates monthly progress reviews and tracks the effectiveness of interventions. Data is anonymized and fed into a centralized VET policy platform at the regional or national level to inform systemic responses and funding priorities. Crucially, the EWMS is designed to be participatory and culturally sensitive: Roma mediators serve as trusted intermediaries between the school and Roma communities, ensuring that alerts are not only technically accurate but socially appropriate.

By combining predictive analytics with personalized intervention and community trust-building, the EWMS serves not only to reduce dropout rates but to institutionalize inclusive practices that recognize the complex realities facing Roma learners in VET settings.

### **EWMS Operationalization Monitoring Components**

#### **A. Real-Time Attendance Tracker**

A digital tool will record and analyze class-by-class attendance, with automatic alerts triggered when a student misses **more than 10% of scheduled hours** in a month. It helps detect disengagement early, especially for learners facing transport issues or domestic burdens common among Roma youth.

#### **B. Academic Performance Dashboard**

An internal database will log grades and practical assessments. A risk flag is generated when a student fails two or more core modules or falls **below the 40% average** threshold. This dashboard is reviewed bi-weekly by teachers and counselors.

#### **C. Socio-Economic Vulnerability Index (SEVI)**

Using intake forms and mediator interviews, each Roma student will be assigned a socio-economic score based on factors such as housing stability, family income, number of dependents, and parent education. Students scoring in the **top 30% risk tier** are prioritized for material support and mentoring.

#### **D. Behavioral Incident Monitor**

Anonymized behavior will log track warnings, conflicts, or signs of social withdrawal. A threshold of **3 incidents per semester** triggers a psycho-social referral. Mediators contextualize these incidents within the learner's home environment.

#### **E. Teacher Alert System**

Teachers will submit monthly qualitative reports via a standard form noting concerns such as lack of materials, frequent fatigue, or bullying. These observations will be entered into the central EWMS and automatically correlated with other indicators to verify urgency.

#### **F. Family Engagement Tracker**



This tool will monitor family-school interaction frequency. A student whose family fails to attend **two consecutive meetings** or refuses contact may be flagged for follow-up home visits by a mediator or social worker.

### G. Support Response Logbook

Once a student is flagged, the intervention history—including tutoring, counseling, subsidies, or mentoring—will be logged. This helps assess whether support is being delivered on time and adjusted if ineffective.

### H. Outcome & Retention Index

This cumulative indicator will measure student persistence and success over time (e.g., module completion rate, re-enrollment, apprenticeship acquisition). It allows for school-level and system-level benchmarking, disaggregated by ethnicity where permitted.

The monitoring components are interlinked to feed data into a **dynamic risk profile** for each student, updated monthly. This profile informs tailored interventions and allows for performance audits of the EWMS. Importantly, it enables **proactive—not reactive—responses**.

## 2. Tailored Financial Support for Roma Students in VET Programs

One of the most immediate and powerful interventions the countries could implement is the expansion of financial support mechanisms for Roma students enrolled in vocational education and training (VET).

**Conditional Cash Transfers (CCTs):** Building on existing benefits, policymakers should introduce CCTs aimed specifically at Roma families with children enrolled in VET programs. These transfers would be linked to the students' school attendance, completion of key milestones (such as final exams or internships), and successful graduation. The payments could cover educational expenses such as travel costs, books, or training materials.

**Vocational Training Scholarships:** Establish a dedicated scholarship fund for Roma students, managed by the relevant Ministries of Education, which can be accessed by families who demonstrate economic need. Additionally, VET providers could compile and provide information on existing scholarships, stipends and grants available to VET students. This would alleviate the financial pressures Roma families face, allowing them to prioritize education without the need for students to drop out and enter the workforce prematurely.

This strategy directly addresses one of the most common reasons for dropout — the financial strain placed on Roma families. By alleviating this burden, it makes vocational education a more viable and attractive option for Roma youth.

## 3. Strengthening Industry-Specific Vocational Pathways with Roma-Focused Apprenticeships

While the countries' education systems often combine classroom instruction with apprenticeships, Roma youth often face difficulties in accessing these apprenticeships. Roma students frequently encounter systemic discrimination and a lack of access to mentors in the workplace, which hinders their ability to integrate into the workforce.

**Targeted Industry Partnerships for Roma Youth:** Establish formal partnerships between vocational schools, businesses, and Roma organizations to ensure Roma students are included in apprenticeship programs. These partnerships should specifically focus on industries that have skill shortages, such as IT, renewable energy, healthcare, and skilled trades. The aim is to create dedicated apprenticeship slots for Roma students, with clear pathways from vocational training into full-time employment.



**Roma-Run Internship Programs:** Partner with Roma NGOs to create internship and mentorship programs within local businesses. Roma students would benefit from having mentors from their own community who can guide them through the apprenticeship process, reducing feelings of alienation and increasing trust in the system. These internships should be remunerated and linked directly to job offers upon completion.

These programs create direct and concrete links between education and employment, providing Roma youth with work experience, skill development, and job opportunities that are tailored to their needs and aligned with the labour market demands.

#### **4. Enhancing Roma-Specific Career Guidance and Mentorship Programs**

A crucial gap in the current educational support systems for Roma youth is the lack of personalized career counselling. Without strong guidance, Roma students may not be aware of the full range of career opportunities available through VET, or they may lack the confidence to pursue them.

**Roma Career Guidance Centres:** Establish career guidance centres within schools and vocational training institutions that are specifically designed for Roma students. These centres should employ Roma counsellors who understand the cultural and social dynamics of Roma communities and can offer personalized support to students.

**Roma Mentor Networks:** Expand mentorship programs; These programs could be scaled up to offer one-on-one mentorship by successful Roma professionals who have navigated VET pathways themselves. Roma students would benefit from direct guidance on career paths, overcoming educational challenges, and gaining insights from people they can relate to.

These personalized support systems would provide Roma students with a clearer sense of direction, boosting their confidence in pursuing VET and providing them with practical advice on how to succeed both academically and professionally.

#### **5. Implementing Dual Education Programs with Flexible Hours for Roma Youth**

Given the high dropout rates, it's essential to introduce more flexible vocational education programs that can accommodate the unique needs of Roma youth. Often, Roma families experience instability and high levels of absenteeism due to family obligations or work, making traditional education schedules difficult to maintain.

**Flexible Vocational Education Programs:** In addition to traditional full-time programs, countries should develop part-time and evening VET options for Roma youth who may have work commitments during the day. This flexibility would allow Roma students to balance their education with family responsibilities or part-time employment, increasing the likelihood of continued participation in training programs.

**Online Vocational Education Platforms:** Collaborate with vocational schools to offer online training modules that can be accessed at any time, tailored to the needs of Roma youth. This approach would particularly benefit Roma students in rural areas, who may have difficulty attending physical institutions due to geographic isolation or transportation issues.

By offering flexible education schedules and online options, it would make vocational education more accessible for Roma youth, reducing absenteeism and ensuring that they stay on track with their education

#### **6. Targeted Anti-Discrimination Policies and Teacher Training**



Roma students face significant challenges with discrimination and bias within schools. These experiences often lead to a disengagement from education, contributing to high dropout rates. To reduce this issue, countries must implement targeted policies that focus on both reducing discrimination in the education system and equipping teachers to work effectively with Roma students.

**Mandatory Teacher Training on Roma History and Cultural Sensitivity:** countries should introduce mandatory, state-sponsored training programs for all teachers in secondary schools and vocational institutions on Roma history, culture, and the socio-economic challenges Roma families face. This training would aim to reduce bias and promote inclusivity within the classroom, ensuring that Roma students feel valued and understood.

**Roma Student Anti-Discrimination Policies:** Create a clear anti-discrimination policy within schools that is actively enforced. This would include reporting systems for Roma students who experience bias, as well as school-wide awareness campaigns to address and reduce discriminatory behaviour toward Roma students.

By addressing bias and promoting cultural awareness among teachers, these measures will create a more welcoming and supportive educational environment for Roma youth, encouraging them to stay engaged and reducing the likelihood of them dropping out due to negative experiences.

## **7. Strengthening Community Engagement and Family Support Systems**

The involvement of Roma families in their children's education is critical to reducing dropout rates. However, many Roma parents face challenges in engaging with the school system due to language barriers, mistrust of institutions, or lack of understanding of the educational system.

**Roma-Focused Family Outreach Programs:** Develop community-based outreach programs that work directly with Roma families to raise awareness of the importance of vocational education. These programs should be culturally sensitive and include home visits, parent-teacher meetings, and informational sessions held in Roma languages to ensure that parents are informed and engaged.

**Roma Family Support Services:** Provide Roma families with access to support services that assist with navigating the school system, offering legal aid for issues related to education, and providing resources for financial support for education-related costs. This could involve collaborations between Roma NGOs and the Ministry of Education to ensure that Roma families are fully supported in ensuring their children's educational success.

By involving Roma families in the educational process and offering tailored support, Roma students are more likely to stay in school and pursue vocational education, leading to higher retention rates and lower dropout rates.

## **8. Feedback and Monitoring**

Effective monitoring and evaluation are crucial for ensuring that services meet the needs of Roma learners and achieve desired outcomes. Regular feedback from learners, families, and stakeholders can help continuously improve services. Suggested methods include:

- **Regular Progress Assessments:** Track academic and personal progress through standardized assessments, teacher evaluations, and self-reports conducted at regular intervals to identify areas needing additional support.
- **Feedback from Learners:** Collect feedback directly from Roma learners about their experiences with provided services through surveys, focus groups, or one-on-one interviews. Encouraging them to express their views on the relevance and effectiveness of support can provide valuable insights.



- Family and Community Input: Engage Roma families and community members in the evaluation process by seeking their feedback on how services impact their children and the community as a whole. Their input can help identify areas for improvement.
- Data-Driven Adjustments: Use data collected through assessments and feedback to make evidence-based adjustments to services. This could involve scaling up successful interventions or adapting strategies to meet changing needs.
- Mentor and Teacher Reflections: Encourage mentors, social workers, and teachers to provide regular reflections on learners' progress and challenges observed in day-to-day interactions. These professionals often have valuable insights into service effectiveness.

## 4. Conclusion

The ultimate goal of the **Intervention mechanism for tackling dropouts of Roma learners Guidebook** is to develop a mechanism to address the issue. By providing tailored support services, promoting partnerships with major stakeholders, and implementing proven strategies, we can create an environment where Roma learners have the tools and opportunities they need to succeed. Education is not just a pathway to personal and professional growth; it is also a powerful means of overcoming the systemic barriers that have historically marginalized Roma communities across Europe.

This guidebook serves as a vital resource for teachers, VET providers, social workers, mediators, and community organizations, enabling them to collaborate effectively in cultivating a supportive, culturally sensitive, and inclusive environment for Roma students and reduce dropouts. Through active collaboration among these parties, we can ensure that educational programs are not only accessible but also relevant to the unique cultural contexts of Roma communities. Continuous monitoring and ongoing feedback mechanisms will allow us to assess the effectiveness of the services provided, ensuring that they remain impactful and responsive to the evolving needs of Roma learners. Furthermore, empowering Roma learners through education is not only an investment in their future but also an important step towards building stronger, more cohesive communities for all. Uplifting marginalized communities and individuals within our society, we contribute to a richer tapestry of cultural diversity that benefits everyone. The success of Roma learners reflects positively on our collective commitment to social justice and equality. To achieve these goals, it is undeniable that we must adopt a holistic and intersectional approach that includes not just academic support, but also emotional and social resources. This includes promoting an environment where Roma students feel safe to express their identities and being encouraged to pursue their aspirations without fear of discrimination or exclusion.

To institutionalize the proposed mechanism for tackling Roma learners' drop-out rates within education policies and ensure long-term sustainability, several key strategies should be implemented. First, an **Early Warning and Monitoring System (EWMS)** could be established, as a preventive mechanism designed to systematically identify and support Roma learners at risk of dropping out from vocational education and training programs, while one of the most immediate and powerful interventions stakeholders could implement is the **expansion of financial support mechanisms** for Roma students enrolled in vocational education and training. The strengthening of Industry-Specific Vocational Pathways with **Roma-Focused Apprenticeships** could complement the enhancement of **Roma-Specific Career Guidance and Mentorship Programs**, as a crucial gap in the current educational support systems for Roma youth is the lack of personalized career counselling. Given the high dropout rates, it's essential to introduce more **flexible vocational education programs** that can accommodate



the unique needs of Roma youth, since quite often, Roma families experience instability and high levels of absenteeism due to family obligations or work.

Roma students face significant challenges with discrimination and bias within schools, and these experiences often lead to disengagement from education, contributing to high dropout rates. To reduce this issue, stakeholders must implement targeted policies that focus on both **reducing discrimination** in the education system and *equipping teachers* to work effectively with Roma students. Finally, the involvement of Roma families in their children's education is critical to reducing dropout rates. However, many Roma parents face challenges in engaging with the school system due to language barriers, mistrust of institutions, or lack of understanding of the educational system. It is thus important to strengthen **Community Engagement and Family Support Systems**.

A strong **monitoring and evaluation system** should be established to assess the effectiveness of the intervention strategies. Regular evaluations, impact assessments, and data collection would enable stakeholders and policymakers to improve their approaches and adapt measures based on evidence and research. Legal protections against discrimination must also be reinforced within education policies to ensure that Roma students have equal access to education, supported by anti-discrimination frameworks, teacher sensitivity training, and mechanisms that enforce these measures and protect them.

By embedding this mechanism within national and regional education frameworks, we can ensure that inclusive education policies for Roma learners are not only implemented effectively but also sustained over time, and dropout rates decrease. This approach will lead to systemic change, providing Roma students with equitable educational opportunities and fostering their long-term academic and social success.



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## 6. Annexes

### ANNEX I: EARLY WARNING AND MONITORING SYSTEM OPERATIONALIZATION MONITORING COMPONENT C: SOCIO-ECONOMIC VULNERABILITY INDEX (SEVI)

Purpose: Identify Roma learners at high socio-economic risk to prioritize support.

Indicator	Description	Score (0–2)
Household income below national poverty line	Verified through documents or mediator assessment	<input type="checkbox"/> 0 <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2
Housing status (temporary/informal/no tenure)	Based on student/parent interview or school file	<input type="checkbox"/> 0 <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2
Parent education level (none or incomplete)	Highest level among parents	<input type="checkbox"/> 0 <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2
Household size (5+ dependents)	Total persons in household	<input type="checkbox"/> 0 <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2
Access to utilities (water/electricity/heating)	All missing = 2, partial = 1, full = 0	<input type="checkbox"/> 0 <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2
Student employment or caregiving duty	Self or family-reported	<input type="checkbox"/> 0 <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2
Disability in household	Self or family member	<input type="checkbox"/> 0 <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2
Documentation/legal status barriers	Issues with ID, residence, or enrollment docs	<input type="checkbox"/> 0 <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2

Total Score: \_\_\_\_ / 16

Risk Level:  Low (0–4)  Moderate (5–9)  High (10–16)

Reviewed by: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



**ANNEX II: EARLY WARNING AND MONITORING SYSTEM OPERATIONALIZATION MONITORING COMPONENT D: BEHAVIORAL INCIDENT MONITOR**

Purpose: Track behavioral incidents and social withdrawal to flag psycho-social risk.

Date	Student Name	Class/Trainer	Incident Type	Description	Action Taken	Referred To	Follow-Up Date

Incident Count (Last 3 Months): \_\_\_\_\_

Intervention Plan Initiated?  Yes  No

Reviewed By: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



**ANNEX III: EARLY WARNING AND MONITORING SYSTEM OPERATIONALIZATION MONITORING COMPONENT E: TEACHER ALERT SYSTEM**

Purpose: Collect qualitative concerns from teachers about learner well-being and risk.

Teacher Name	Date	Student Name	Main Concern Observed	Details (Optional)	Urgency Level	Suggested Follow-Up

Follow-Up Initiated?  Yes  No

Referred To: \_\_\_\_\_

Feedback Received?  Yes  No

Teacher Signature: \_\_\_\_\_



**ANNEX IV: EARLY WARNING AND MONITORING SYSTEM OPERATIONALIZATION MONITORING COMPONENT E: OUTCOME AND RETENTION INDEX**

Purpose: Monitor the learner's progress toward VET completion and retention over time.

Student Name	Year	Program Level	Term	Indicators	Score

Total Risk Score This Term: \_\_\_\_\_ / 6

Retention Status:  At risk  Stable  Improving

Reviewed by: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_