

PARTNERSHIP DATA SHEET for HUNGARY AND POLAND

Introduction

This partnership data sheet for the B3 – 4000 project has been designed in light of observations made by Dorotea Daniele and Pierluca Ghibelli on the current situation, characteristics and concerns in Poland:

- 1) Lack of awareness of social responsibility in business
- 2) Country with high emigration
- 3) Existence of illegal immigration
- 4) Existence of former Vietnamese immigration during the communist period

This partnership data sheet for the B3 – 4000 project has been designed in light of the observations made by Denis Stokkink on the situation of ethnic minorities in Hungary (Roms) and information provided by the Hungarian Embassy:

- 1) Presence of ethnic minorities (Roms)
- 2) Presence of Hungarian-born Hungarians who, due to border changes following various international agreements, hold non-Hungarian passports (this situation affects some 5 million Hungarians).
- 3) Return to Hungary of Hungarians who emigrated in 1956 (generally pensioners)
- 4) Former high levels of Chinese immigration (80,000 in Budapest) during the communist period and until 1998 (during the communist period the Chinese did not require a visa to enter Hungary)
- 5) Waves of immigration (Afghans, Africans from Black Africa (Nigeria, Cameroon, Guinea), former Soviet republics (Belarus, Ukraine, Georgia, Moldavia, Armenia, etc.)
- 6) Until recently, Hungary was a transit country towards western Europe. With its accession to the European Union, Hungary is now seeing a trend towards the sedentarisation of these waves of immigration.

This partnership data sheet will focus primarily on the partnership and its development in an attempt to monitor the integration of immigrant populations and the fight against negative discrimination. Social responsibility in business in these two countries remains largely non-existent. The areas of priority and urgent action lie in other directions. However, it is important to underline the importance of the social economy in Poland and Hungary. One question will therefore be devoted to business responsibility in its strictest sense.

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1. The partnership

Question 1 is designed to elicit an explanation of the nature of your partnership in concrete terms and of the factors which led you to form this partnership.

Answered by the Mediator Foundation.

What was the starting point?

We were contacted by Axelero and Matav to help initiate the program in September of 2003. Matav is the leading Hungarian telephone company, and Axelero is their Internet arm.

With which immigrants and ethnic minorities do you currently have contact or relations?

Roma.

What led you to take an interest in these immigrants and ethnic minorities?

This group has been the focus of our foundation's activities since its inception in 2000. The Foundation was established by a number of activists and scholars with a humanitarian interest in the situation of Roma in Hungary and Central Europe.

What is the social situation of these immigrants and ethnic minorities?

Of thirteen recognised minorities, the Roma are the most disadvantaged and suffer from the most severe poverty and discrimination. In terms of most social indicators, they fall far behind. This applies to things like income, education, health, life expectancy, incarceration, etc.

What is the legal status of these immigrants and ethnic minorities?

They are full citizens of Hungary.

Has the historical background of the host country influenced the situation of these immigrants and ethnic minorities?

The transition from a state planned economy to a market economy – which meant privatisation and the shutting down of several unprofitable enterprises – has meant a serious increase in unemployment for unskilled labourers. Most Roma with employment under socialism fell under this category, and thus were soon out of work. This compounds many of the other social issues the Roma face.

Further, there is a high degree of racism and chauvinism in Hungarian society. This is evidenced in surveys of future history teachers, for example.

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Why did you launch the partnership?

Matav wished to help disadvantaged groups and expand Internet access in society by offering our target group internet training at no cost. Given that they were not able to establish a working partnership with the National Roma Self-Government, they turned to us to access our network of Roma NGOs, local level elected Roma bodies, and activists.

How would you define the partnership?

The Mediator Foundation provided access to potential local organisers and trainees through its contacts. The foundation propagated and communicated the program.

Who are the players in the partnership?

Matav, Axelero, Mediator Foundation, 30 Roma NGOs (12 community centres) from the countryside. This later expanded to include the Minority Commissioner at the Ministry of Education and several schools (note: Mediator was not involved in that later stage).

When did the partnership start (date)?

September 1, 2003.

When is the partnership scheduled to end?

December 31, 2003 (has ended already)

How did you use to launch the partnership?

We used the Mediator Foundation website (www.romacentrum.hu) and email lists to advertise the program. The program was fully designed by the commercial partners. The Mediator Foundation recommended participants. A request for proposals was put up on the website, where Roma organisations could apply to host a training session at no cost to the organisation.

Explain how the partnership operates?

There was constant communication among the partners. The Foundation was used mainly to access potential participants. The partners discussed the progress and experiences of the program with the participants. They co-operated in completing questionnaires with the participants. The program ended with a press conference, where the Foundation presented its findings and position. The commercial and NGO partners are still in touch after the completion of the program, and are considering co-operating again in the future.

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List the activities you have developed within the framework of the partnership?

The key activity developed was training. This was later offered to other institutions that affect Roma communities.

The partnership eased the financial burden of the Mediator Foundation (through funding of the Foundation telephone and toll-free service) and has helped the Foundation better manage many of its computer-based activities. The Foundation and the commercial partners have entertained the idea of co-operating in a future project (by writing a joint proposal), but nothing has come of this yet.

What aims are you seeking to achieve in launching the partnership?

To increase the capacities of local Roma partners.

Do you have an operating budget for the partnership?

From the point of view of the commercial partners, this was only one segment of a much wider program: the program also focused on developing Internet access for the physically disabled and the blind. The full budget was 6 million HUF, and we cannot calculate the precise budget for the Roma portion of this program.

Have you received any public and/or private funding for the partnership?

No.

How many people are working on the partnership?

6 trainers; 1 co-ordinator; 2 organisers.

How many people are involved in the partnership?

200 trainees.

Have you set up monitoring procedures to evaluate the partnership?

No. Participant questionnaires were distributed, filled in and collected at the end of the program. There was also a questionnaire distributed also after every training session. Thus monitoring was continuous.

Is there any other important information not covered by the previous questions, which you think should be mentioned? (Please answer yes / no and provide an explanation where necessary):

No.

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2. Details of the initiator of the partnership project

Question 2 is designed to elicit details of the individual/organisation whose idea it was to launch the partnership and which has been the driving force behind it from the outset.

Full name: Matav Rt.
Address: Budapest, Krisztina krt. 55.
Telephone: +36 1 431 1696
Email: fischer.gabor@ln.matav.hu

3. Details of the other partners involved in the partnership

Question 3 is designed to elicit details of the individuals/organisation who accepted the initiator's invitation to join the partnership and to illustrate the basic principle which underlies this difference between the partnership project initiator on one hand and the other partners on the other.

Name: Mediator Foundation
Address: H-1072, Budapest, Nyár str. 12.
Telephone: 413 6628
Email: info@romacentrum.hu

4. Sector in which the initiator of the partnership project operates

Answered by Matav.

Question 4 is designed to establish the economic and social sector in which the initiator of the partnership project operates?

Does the initiator of the partnership project operate in the primary / secondary / tertiary sector? (Please underline as appropriate and provide details):

The initiator is a commercial telecommunications enterprise.

Does the initiator of the partnership project operate in the third sector. If so, in which area?

Matav has very many such projects. The most important is the "University of All Knowledge" program (an internet-based public-access education program) and we are sponsoring a lot of civic organisations of all types. We just received an award for our work in equality of opportunity called "Living Diversity".

Matav has partnerships with several NGOs, and supports many of them through various programs. Axelero supports several education programs having to do with internet use.

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Is there any other important information not covered by the previous question which you think should be mentioned? (Please answer yes / no and provide an explanation where necessary):

No.

5. Sectors in which the other partners in the partnership operate

Answered by Mediator Foundation

Question 5 is designed to establish the economic and social sectors in which the other partnership project partners operate.

Do the other partners in the partnership project operate in the primary / secondary / tertiary sector? (Please underline as appropriate and provide details):

The Foundation has some involvement in secondary education programs, and is mostly active in NGO and adult education sectors.

Do the other partners in the partnership project operate in the third sector? If so, in which areas?

Yes. The main fields of the Foundation's activities are: minority rights; community development; training; information service; liaison; capacity building; all in the Roma field.

Is there any other important information not covered by the previous question which you think should be mentioned? (Please answer yes / no and provide an explanation where necessary):

No.

6. Special characteristics of the initiator of the partnership project

Question 6 is designed to establish whether any factors either related or external to the launch and operation of the partnership - economic and financial situation, employment situation, geographical location - have influenced the launch and operation of the partnership project for and by the project initiator.

Do you think that the initial economic and financial situation of your organisation influenced your decision to form this partnership?

Have you received funding? If so, from whom?

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Is external funding an important factor in the operation of our organisation?

Is external funding an important factor in the launch and operation of the partnership project?

Has the employment profile of your organisation - number of staff, nationality, age range, gender, employee status - influenced the launch and operation of the partnership project?

Outline the profile of your organisation in terms of number of staff, nationality, age range, gender and employee status.

Do you think that the geographical location of your organisation - urban/rural location, area of high/low population density, high/low immigrant density - has influenced the launch and operation of the partnership project?

Outline the geographical profile of your organisation indicating whether it is located in an urban/rural location or in an area of high/low population density or high/low immigrant density.

7. The socio-political environment of the initiator of the partnership project

Answered by Mediator Foundation, the NGO partner.

Question 7 is designed to establish whether any aspects of the socio-economic situation of the initiator of the partnership project favour or promote the development of the partnership project in terms of the integration of immigrant populations and the fight against negative discrimination. Question 7 is broad and general in its scope.

Do you believe that there are conditions which control access to the employment market? If so, what are they?

Yes. Education level, skin-colour, appearance, speech patters, dress, living conditions (rural, town, urban), etc. all affect access to the labour market. These present many unique obstacles for Roma citizens.

Have these conditions which control access to the employment market affected the partnership project?

Certainly the effort to increase and modernise skills in this disadvantaged group is beneficial to the participants. It can lead to further training, or increase their ability to organise at the community level.

Is there a national, regional or local framework which shapes the fight against negative discrimination?

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Hungarian Parliament passed an Equality of Opportunity Law in January of 2004, which seeks to curb racial discrimination. It is not fully implemented, and will be phased in over time. There are also efforts at the level of Ministries to overcome discrimination issues (e.g., Education, Labour, Health, etc.)

Have you had recourse to this legal framework which shapes the fight against negative discrimination in launching and funding the partnership project?

The legal framework was not yet in place when the training took place. The training was technical in nature (as opposed to rights-driven or political), which means that any legal framework would have had very little effect on the program.

Is there a regional or local framework which promotes the integration of immigrant populations?

There are several NGOs active in this field. We are not one of them, as our work focuses on Roma, who are for the most part not immigrants.

Have you had recourse to this legal framework which promotes the integration of immigrant populations in launching and funding the partnership project?

N.A.

Are there any political, social, cultural or media factors which led you to launch this partnership project?

The well-known disadvantage and situation of widespread discrimination against Roma has inspired this project and similar projects.

Have you developed a social responsibility policy?

The goals and the charter of the Foundation reflect the social responsibility position of the organisation. Matav also has a social charter, which strengthens their position on social responsibility.

What do you understand by a social responsibility policy?

A set of attitudes and actions that acknowledge unjust inequalities in society and take steps to remedy them.

Have you developed a social label, a code of good practice, social audits, a gender equality policy, etc.?

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No. The Foundation is very small, and has not come up against these issues yet. Among the staff through the history of the Foundation, more than two-thirds have been of Roma origin, and a vast majority have been women.

Do you take part in social and economic benefit programmes at European, national, regional or local level?

Yes. We have had programs sponsored by international, European, regional, and national organisations, both state and private.

Do the other partners in the partnership project inhabit a different socio-political environment to yours?

The partner in the program is a for-profit corporation, with an organisational culture very different to ours. We are unaware of their political positions. Their good policy on social responsibility indicates much common ground.

Have your partners in the partnership project developed a social responsibility policy?

Matav had one in place before the launch of the project. The project can be seen as an implementation of that policy.

Have your partners in the partnership project developed a social label, a code of good practice, social audits, a gender equality policy, etc.?

Yes.

Do your partners in the partnership project take part in social and economic benefit programmes at European, national, regional or local level?

Yes. Matav is active in the EU Equal program, and funds several Hungarian NGOs.

8. Benchmarking

Question 8 is designed to measure social, economic and environmental performance in terms of the integration of immigrant populations and the fight against negative discrimination.

Do you think that this partnership project for the integration of immigrant populations and the fight against negative discrimination has changed your social and economic environment?

Yes, it has increased skills in a very disadvantaged segment of the population.

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Do you think that this partnership project for the integration of immigrant populations and the fight against negative discrimination has changed the social and economic environments of your partners in the partnership?

The NGO partner already has a progressive social and economic environment (that is its raison d'être). The commercial partner's environment is in part influenced by its Western owner. Our experience shows that when training occurs in Roma communities, very often the trainers are the most affected (in terms of overcoming prejudice, becoming aware of discrimination, etc.) of all present. This applies to this program.

Do you think that this partnership project has influenced policies on the integration of immigrant populations and the fight against negative discrimination in terms of ethnic minorities?

No. Although its extension in the schools may have some influence.

Do you plan to introduce a social responsibility policy in your organisation as a result of the launch of this partnership project?

These were already in place prior to the project.

Do your partners in the project plan to introduce a social responsibility policy in their organisations as a result of the launch of this partnership project?

These were already in place prior to the project.

Has this partnership project led the emergence of solidarity networks? If so, explain how and detail the networks?

It has to a small degree strengthened existing networks at the local level by providing skills and common experience.

Has this partnership project raised awareness of the issues involved in public authorities at European, national, regional or local level?

The project was well-publicised, but we are not aware of whether the public authorities followed it or not.

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9. Social responsibility in business

Answered by Matav.

Question 9 is designed to establish whether this activities carried out within the framework of this project has affected local businesses in terms of the integration of immigrant populations and ethnic minorities and the fight against negative discrimination.

Do you think that your partnership project has made businesses at local, regional and national level more aware of the issues of the integration of immigrant communities and ethnic minorities and the fight against negative discrimination involved or even led them to introduce these issues into their managerial policy?

Yes, we trained local Roma political leaders. Anti discrimination is important. The program had a second part with Victoria Mohacsi (State Commissioner for Education Rights), where we visited segregated schools, where we held training for both teachers and students. We received many letters of thanks which underscored our success in the program. I think we affected other companies. The program was very well publicised. Our competition contacted us and asked whether the program was worth it, beyond the obvious moral position.

Do you think that the businesses in your country, whether at local, regional or national level, are ready to embrace a policy of social responsibility in business (creation of a social label, a code of good practice, social audits, a gender equality policy)?

I can't speak for the entire business community, but our company has already done so . We are participants in the EU *Equal* program. As far as I am aware, this position (open to corporate social responsibility) is not typical of the business sector in Hungary. We are unique. We are owned by Deutsche Telekom, and we are encouraged by them to do such work. Our company has a Social Charter. We have a program called T SPIRIT (this is an acronym). One of its elements is "Respect". This has to do with minorities, differences, empathy and help.

Do you think that the businesses in your country, whether at local, regional or national level, are ready to join you in forming a partnership in the field of the integration of immigrant populations and ethnic minorities and/or the fight against negative discrimination?

Yes, speaking for ourselves. We have embarked on this already. We have, for example, a so-called donation line. People can donate 100 HUF to a given charity, and minority organisations have benefited from this program already.

Note: the respondent's optimistic answered are based on experience at his own company, which, by his own admission, is exceptionally active in corporate citizenship.

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