

Project title: Promoting social cohesion in Moldova through the study of Gagauz and Romanian languages in Gagauz-Yeri autonomous territorial unit

Project duration: 9 months (01.01.2021-30.09.2021)

The project is funded by the Embassy of the Netherlands and SOROS Foundation Moldova

The overall goal: is to support the preservation of the Gagauz language and culture and to bridge the cultural and linguistic divide, growing mistrust and alienation between Gagauz-Yeri ATU and the rest of Moldova.

Specific Objectives (SMART):

- Improve the understanding on the overall framework for the functioning of the Gagauz and Romanian languages in Gagauz-Yeri ATU.
- Facilitate institutional collaboration between the key stakeholders to achieve sustainable improvement in the study of the Gagauz and Romanian language in the Autonomous Territorial Unit of Gagauz-Yeri.
- Increase public awareness about the study of the Gagauz and Romanian languages in Gagauz-Yeri ATU.

Project beneficiaries

The direct beneficiaries of the project:

- The Executive Committee of Gagauz-Yeri ATU, the Agency for Inter-ethnic relations, the Ministry for Education, Culture and Research. The authorities will benefit from conclusions and recommendations and will receive the road map and the action plan to enhance the studying and functioning of the Gagauz and Romanian languages in Gagauz-Yeri ATU.
- School teachers, university teachers, children, pupils, students, parents from Gagauz-Yeri ATU.

The indirect beneficiaries of the project:

- Central-level government, the Parliament of Moldova (Committee for Human Right and Inter-ethnic relations and Committee for Education), the office of the Bashkan, the People's Assembly of Gagauz-Yeri ATU;
- Expert community, representatives of the international organizations and donor community.

The team of experts:

- national expert on multilingual educational policies;
- national expert on interethnic consolidation and conflict resolution;
- national expert on sociology;
- international expert on human rights;
- international expert on minority issues;
- international expert on multilingual language policies.

Project activities:

Activity: Draft a report on the current situation with the study of the Gagauz and Romanian languages in the autonomous region.

The report will be prepared by the team of 3 national and 3 international experts.

The goal of the report is to provide a comprehensive evaluation of the results of previous and current public policies with the study of the Gagauz and Romanian languages in the autonomous region. The first report's objective is to summarize positive results as well as possible mistakes and/or limitations within the implementation of previous and current public policies based also on the sociological assessment of people's attitudes. The second report's objective is to use the conclusions of this research as a foundation to develop a realistic draft roadmap based not only on international experience, but also considering previous national/regional/local experience of the Republic of Moldova.

The report will include:

- a desk review of available documents to describe the overall framework for the functioning of the Gagauz and Romanian languages in Gagauz-Yeri ATU;
- an evaluation of public policies;
- the exact level of language skills, availability and qualification of teachers, schools and programs in Gagauz and Romanian;
- assessment of people's attitudes and willingness to learn the languages;
- a review of previous and current efforts and programs;
- a review of international institutions' recommendations in this field.

Activity: Draft a roadmap to enhance the studying and functioning of the Gagauz and Romanian languages in Gagauz-Yeri ATU.

The roadmap will be prepared by the team of 3 national and 3 international experts, based on the report on the current situation with the study of the Gagauz and Romanian languages in the autonomous region, and will include:

- solutions on enhancing the study and use of the Gagauz and Romanian languages in formal education in Gagauz-Yeri ATU;
- modalities and budget for the implementation of such programs.

Activity: Establish a multi-stakeholder platform which would involve the central-level government, the Ministry for Education, the Agency for Inter-ethnic relations, the Moldovan parliament (Committee for Human Right and Inter-ethnic relations and Committee for Education), the office of the Bashkan and the executive committee of Gagauz-Yeri, the People's Assembly, the administration of Gagauz-Yeri's three rayons, the donor community and key embassies, as well as international and local experts.

The role of this platform is to discuss and reach a compromise regarding the main conclusions of the results of previous and current public policies as well as the roadmap, incorporation of its recommendations into long-term public policies. The goal is to have an institutional common approach and strength institutional collaboration on strategic public policies in this field regardless personalities, political parties and ideologies.

Activity: Conduct at least 3 high-level meetings of multi-stakeholder platform and experts to look into the report and the proposed solutions, establish the framework for collaboration between the central, regional and local levels, as well as promote the solutions through available channels.

Activity: Conduct public discussions in three regions in Gagauz-Yeri - Comrat, Ceadâr-Lunga, and Vulcănești, with the involvement of top-level stakeholder from central, regional and local level, and participation of high-school students, youth activists, university students, teachers, local administrations, experts from the local and national level and community leaders, in order to popularize the report 's conclusions and the roadmap and ensure its understanding at the local level.

The goal of these public discussions is to inform the local public opinion about the roadmap content and to engage them into its implementation.

Activity: Conduct information actions in the Gagauz autonomy and the rest of Moldova using mainly the principle of raising awareness, this means that the produced content will be aimed at informing primarily the population of Gagauzia, but also people outside the autonomy, about the right of Moldovan ethnic minorities to education in native and state languages.

Activity: Organize an international conference to present conclusions and recommendations of the report, road map and draw high level attention to solutions of promoting the functioning and use of the Gagauz and Romanian language in Gagauz-Yeri ATU. The conference will involve the participation of high-level officials and international experts and will present the results of the project, its main conclusions and solutions and the key steps to enhance sustainable study and use of the Gagauz and Romanian language. The conference, its conclusions and the roadmap will be covered on key national and regional TV channels, including Gagauz TV, as well online and through social networks.