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Community Information Platforms for Social and Digital Inclusion of Disadvantaged Roma in Cluj-Napoca, Romania

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Abstract: Research on Roma communities in Romania has primarily focused on social exclusion, while the issue of digital exclusion has not received significant attention from the academic community. This study aims to contribute to the existing literature by exploring how vulnerable Roma communities from Cluj-Napoca, Romania navigate and utilize information platforms, with the main goal of highlighting the importance of a community platform that facilitates both social and digital inclusion. The study is based on a conventional survey (n=146), conducted in two phases. In the first phase, the information collection practices of the communities are assessed, investigating the need for a community radio station to promote Roma culture and facilitate access to information and services. In the subsequent phase, the impact of such a platform in the form of an online radio station is analyzed. The study's findings emphasize that the implementation of a digital platform dedicated to the community, such as Radio Pata, has had a positive impact in combating digital exclusion, providing an online space for the rapid dissemination of information. Furthermore, the platform addresses social exclusion by facilitating community access to various services and promoting Roma identity and culture through the information provided.

Key-words: *Digital exclusion, social exclusion, digital poverty, access to information,* digital divides, Roma

1. Introduction

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This case study explores how Roma communities in Cluj-Napoca, Romania, face digital exclusion while simultaneously experiencing social exclusion. We emphasize the interconnectedness of these two social challenges. The goal of the research is to analyze the role of dedicated informational platforms, such as Radio Pata – an online radio platform implemented during this study – in bridging the digital divide. Using primary quantitative data, the study aims to answer the research question: **"How does a community radio contribute to the social and digital inclusion of Roma communities in Cluj-Napoca?"** Social science literature (Maina and Simiyu; Mitchell and Lewis 2018; Malik 2010) suggests that platforms like Radio Pata can play a crucial role in facilitating the social inclusion of minorities by providing essential resources and opportunities, thus reducing their marginalization and promoting integration into both digital and social spheres.

The community in Pata Rât, Cluj-Napoca, lives in a segregated residential area on the outskirts of the city that often goes unnoticed by the city's residents. The area is predominantly inhabited by Roma individuals. Locals commonly refer to it as the "landfill," due to its proximity to the city landfill. In reality, the area is home to impoverished people forcibly relocated to this area by the local authorities. The situation has been recognized by the Council of the European Union as one of the most severe cases of social marginalization in Romania.

Pata Rât was established following a series of forced evictions, which left many individuals displaced and homeless — either literally, or by relocating them to "emergency housing" provided by the authorities, often failing to meet minimum standards of decent living conditions (Căși sociale 2020, 2). The community consists of four distinct sub-communities: Strada Cantonului, Dallas, Colina Verde/Coastei, and Rampa. A 2012 study reported a total of 245 households in these areas, housing 1,156 individuals (Raț 2012, 2). Regarding the age distribution, 691 individuals were 14 years old and over, while 465 were children under 14 years old (Raț 2012). A later study (Vincze and Dohotaru 2016, 6) estimated the population at approximately 1,500 residents, while the most recent study (Călian and Rostaș 2019, 2) noted around 2,000 people. There has been a continuous population increase in Pata Rât, despite the limited number of social housing units provided by the authorities.

In these four sub-communities, decisions by both the authorities and Pata Rât residents regarding the community's visibility in public spaces vary significantly. Residents have consistently played a crucial role in the functioning of the city as a whole, particularly in recycling waste sorting and supporting local waste management companies (such as sanitation services, landfill operators, and recycling firms), yet they rarely receive fair benefits for their contributions (Vincze 2016, 30). There are ongoing expectations for public authorities to intervene and invest in improving living conditions and ensuring housing security in the area (Vincze 2016).

The significance of this study lies in highlighting the applicability to this case of the transformative impact of technological advancements over the past century, which has driven progress in areas such as health, social care, education, and employment. Benefits from technological advancements are often unequally distributed, as noted by Scadding and Sweeney (2018), Townsend, Salemink and Wallace (2020) and Sándor et al. (2020), therefore deepening social divides. Access to the benefits of digital technologies requires sufficient resources at both individual and community levels, yet these resources are often distributed unequally among people, communities, and regions. This unequal distribution creates significant barriers to both digital and social inclusion, further marginalizing vulnerable groups like the Roma community (Ragnedda, Ruiu and Addeo 2022, 1-2).

Following the emergence of the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic, numerous studies (Velicu, Barbovschi, and Rotaru 2022; Sandor et al. 2020; Digby et al. 2022) were published examining inequalities and

digital gaps between countries, communities, and individuals, including digital gaps and inequalities faced by Roma communities in recent years. Yet, the study of digital exclusion of Roma communities has received little attention in Romania. We aim to contribute to this literature, given that social exclusion alone is the most frequently encountered topic (Pop and Roth 2015; Kiss, Fosztó and Fleck, 2009; Moise and Roth 2011) in the study of the social challenges faced by Roma minorities. The Roma population in Romania has faced marginalization and social exclusion since their arrival in Europe and Romania. Despite the fact that the Roma have been freed from slavery for over a century and a half, their situation has not improved significantly; on the contrary, researchers Mládek and Pukaová (2019) report severe cases of social isolation and rejection by society.

Discussions about the exclusion of the Roma in the Romanian specialized literature (Varga 2021, 2022; Badescu et al. . 2007) describe several types of exclusion faced by the community. According to the authors (Mládek and Pukaová 2019, 42-43), the process of social exclusion of Roma (those in Slovakia) manifests itself in various ways, including through economic exclusion, symbolic and psychological exclusion, political exclusion, exclusion from access to social services and spatial exclusion. Digital communication is only a new form of exclusion for them, but it also offers new opportunities for empowerment that can contribute to the process of social inclusion.

2. Literature review

Social exclusion is a sociological phenomenon that has sparked numerous expert debates (Sen 2000; Levitas et al. 2007; Day 2021; Varga 2021). Social exclusion is a multifaceted concept that refers to restricting the access of vulnerable groups to various resources and services, as well as creating an unfavourable environment for them to participate in economic, social, cultural, or political activities, thereby affecting their quality of life and social inclusion (Levitas et al. 2007, 9) While social exclusion refers to the limitation of access to resources and services, digital exclusion extends this concept into the realm of technology, where marginalized groups are unable to participate fully in the digital age due to lack of access to Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) (Sanders 2020, 4). Social and digital exclusion are intricately linked, with one often exacerbating the other. Digital exclusion in particular mirrors and deepens social exclusion, making it even more difficult for marginalized groups like the Roma to access resources and opportunities in the modern world.

2.1. Social and digital exclusion concept

Sen (2000) associates social exclusion with the concept of "poverty". According to Sen (2000, 4), social exclusion is linked to the concept of "poverty" defined as the inability to live a minimally decent life. Sen (2000, 14-15) distinguishes between active and passive social exclusion. Active exclusion occurs when communities are directly excluded from essential services, such as the segregation of Roma children in schools, or preventing them from accessing education (Varga 2022). Passive exclusion happens indirectly, such as when decisions like the shift to online education during COVID lockdowns, though not meant to exclude, disproportionately affect communities without the necessary resources, like access to technology or the internet.

Digital exclusion is often linked to digital poverty, where individuals or communities lack access to digital tools or knowledge to engage fully with digital platforms. This gap not only reflects the lack of physical resources (e.g., devices, internet connection) but also the absence of opportunities

for digital literacy and skills development (Barrantes 2007, 30; Gilbert 2010, 1001). Individuals who are digitally poor do not have access to the information and communications provided by digital technology due to a lack of knowledge or a lack of income that would allow them to buy technology devices on the one hand, and provide services through which they could improve their ICT knowledge on the other (Barrantes 2007, 38).

We can see the connection between social and digital exclusion in the work of Velicu, Barbovschi and Rotaru (2022, 1): "digital exclusion mirrors and deepens social exclusion", so communities that are already excluded tend to become more excluded (Salemink 2016, 171). Manuel Castells (2004, 3) states in his work that humanity is moving from an industrial society to a new era based on information and knowledge, thus becoming a "network society" and redefining the structure of society. Castells (2004, 231) argues that humanity is transitioning from an industrial society to a network society, where access to information and communication technology (ICT) is essential for participation, communities without access to these digital networks are at risk of being left behind, as new markets and job opportunities require technological adaptation.

Digby et al. (2022) agree that digital exclusion includes social exclusion, but they believe that this is only achieved if these services are only available digitally; for example, during the pandemic, they show that certain vulnerable communities were excluded because access to certain services required the access to digital technology. Digital divides can be classified into three categories (Digby et al. 2022, 8): access, skills, and exploitation of resources. The first category is access to technology, which refers to a person's or a community's lack of access to digital infrastructure such as high-speed internet or devices. The second one is a lack of digital literacy and skills, which indicates a lack of knowledge regarding the effective and efficient use of technology. This level, according to the authors (Digby et al. 2022, 3), creates gaps in accessing opportunities relating to education, employment, or other online resources. The last category denotes a reduced ability to exploit digital resources qualitatively - this level creates gaps between people who can use technology to improve their lives and those who do not.

Digital exclusion can deepen social exclusion among those who lack access to it (Helsper 2012, 3). In other words, as observed by Salemink (2016, 173) and Van Dijk (2005, 158), digitization can be associated with the "Matthew effect", which, in this context, means that the wealthy benefit disproportionately from technological advancements, as they have the resources and education to maximize digital opportunities. In contrast, disadvantaged communities, such as the Roma, become more marginalized as they lack access to both technology and the skills to use it, exacerbating existing inequalities. According to this view, high-income individuals, who already have access to a variety of digital resources due to their socioeconomic status, benefit more from technological advancements which continue to broaden the scope of technological use. This is also due to their higher level of education, which provides them with greater ICT competence, not just financial resources. In the case of poor communities, however, the effect will be the opposite: as technology advances, it gets even more difficult to access, and they will become more isolated from society. This dynamic creates a digital divide between advantaged and disadvantaged communities.

Digital exclusion and inclusion are contrasted by authors (Helsper 2012; Townsend, Salemink and Wallace 2020). Digital inclusion refers to the activities that are required to ensure that all individuals and communities, regardless of ethnicity, race, gender, or socioeconomic status, have access to information and communication technologies (National Digital Inclusion Alliance 2017; Richardson and Wilson 2024, 2). Digital inclusion includes: ”1) affordable, robust broadband internet service; 2) internet-enabled devices that meet the needs of the user; 3) access to digital literacy training; 4) quality technical support; and 5) applications and online content designed to

enable and encourage self-sufficiency, participation and collaboration. " (National Digital Inclusion Alliance 2017). The digital inclusion can provide opportunities for the poor to get access to information, education, jobs, health services, and other vital resources that can improve the quality of life by increasing social and economic life (Ruhyana and Ess 2020, 320) has a direct impact on social inclusion. Similarly, digital inclusion can help to increase social capital while also facilitating social interactions (Reisdorf and Rhinesmith 2020, 134).

2.2. Social and Digital Exclusion in the Case of Roma Communities

In the case of the Roma, several studies (Robinson et al. 2020; Velicu, Barbovschi and Rotaru 2022; Tana, Hasa and Osmanaj 2021) specify that ethnicity can play an important role when we talk about digital inequalities. Disadvantaged ethnic and racial groups have less access to the Internet and digital resources, an aspect that is due to existing social and economic inequalities (Robinson et al. 2020, 7). The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the digital exclusion of Roma children, who were already disadvantaged in education. Many Roma families lacked the devices or the digital literacy needed to access online education, further deepening the educational gap. Hasa and Osmanaj (2021, 1530) conducted a study during the epidemic in Albania, interviewing numerous Roma teachers, principals, and parents. Roma parents who had the necessary devices, were unable to assist their children in accessing online education due to a lack of necessary skills.

Digital inclusion can facilitate social inclusion by improving access to education, health services, and employment opportunities. For Roma communities, this could mean bridging the digital divide, gaining access to vital resources, and participating more fully in society. According to the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (2022, 24), 80% of Roma surveyed in 2021 face a high risk of poverty, compared to 17% for the EU as a whole (EU average). Furthermore, 33% of Roma households lack an indoor toilet, and 22% lack access to running water. Roma children are especially vulnerable to poverty, with a poverty rate of 37.7% compared to the national rate in Romania of 4.3% (Tesliuc et al. 2015, 34). These data indicate that people in this community have difficulty accessing necessities, implying that acquiring certain technological tools is difficult. Spatial Exclusion manifests as the phenomenon of residential segregation (Parno, Ștefănescu and Stănescu 2024) which is a major issue for Roma communities. According to the World Bank (2014, 16), 51% of Roma live in segregated residential neighbourhoods. According to the report (World Bank 2014,17) such Roma communities have poor health, drop out of school early, have a low presence in the municipal market, and have limited access to various services (electricity, water, sewage, internet).

Another factor that contributes to Roma digital exclusion is a low level of education (Barrantes 2007; Townsend, Salemink, and Wallace 2020). Barrantes (2007, 35) describes how people with a low level of education find it much more difficult to access the information and opportunities provided by the digital age. Roma continue to face barriers to obtaining a good education in the European Union. According to data from the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) (2016, 12), young Roma aged 6-24 leave school at a significantly higher rate than the rest of the population in most EU Member States. In countries with higher Roma participation in education, approximately 18% of Roma have attended or are attending an education that is inappropriate for their age, and reports indicate that between 4% and 29% have been or are still enrolled in segregated schools. Another consequence of spatial exclusion is the establishment of segregated schools, also known as ghetto schools (Varga 2022, 75). In segregated schools where

the educational quality is lower than the average, Roma students may not be offered opportunities to develop their ICT skills.

In the case of the Roma, digital inclusion would have a significant impact on social inclusion. Townsend, Salemink, and Wallace (2020, 647) emphasize that digital inclusion allows members of Roma communities to access jobs via online platforms, it facilitates access to social and health services, it can help enhancing contact between Roma culture and majority cultures.

Given these interdependencies between social and digital exclusion, we aim to highlight how digital communication can improve social inclusion in the case of the Roma community in Cluj-Napoca, Romania. We conducted a descriptive study leveraging the implementation of an online streaming radio station dedicated to the Roma community in Pata Rat. The following sections will present the methods used and will interpret the results.

3. Methods

The current study is a descriptive quantitative research based on 146 questionnaires distributed across 6 Roma communities in Cluj-Napoca: Dallas, Cantonului, Rampa, Coastei, Stephenson, and Meșterul Manole. Out of the 146 respondents, aged between 18 and 77 years, 91 were female and 55 were male. The Cantonului community had the highest number of respondents (43), followed by Coastei (46), Dallas (23), Meșterul Manole (18), Stephenson (16), and Rampa (10). Theses communities are referred to as Pata Rât, a segregated residential area on the outskirts of Cluj-Napoca, which is predominantly inhabited by Roma individuals. It is commonly referred to as the 'landfill' due to its location and living conditions, which result from a history of forced evictions. The community faces severe social marginalization, as recognized by the European Union, and is home to approximately 2,000 people (Călian and Rostaș 2019). Despite contributing to waste management and sanitation services, the residents rarely benefit from improvements in their living conditions or increased visibility in public spaces (Vincze 2016). The ongoing challenges in Pata Rât, including limited access to social housing, underscore the community's vulnerability to both social and digital exclusion.

To fulfil the purpose of this study (which aims to analyze the role of dedicated informational platforms, such as Radio Pata, in reducing the digital divide in marginalized Roma communities in Cluj-Napoca), a convenience sample was used, selected to reflect the demographics of the target population. Each participant was individually informed about the purpose and objectives of the research. It is important to note that this study has certain limitations, the primary one being related to the representativeness of the sample. Nevertheless, it provides valuable insights into how marginalized and segregated Roma communities in Cluj-Napoca experience both social and digital exclusion. The distribution of the questionnaires took place in two distinct stages.

In the first wave (February 10 to March 6, 2022), the primary objective was to assess the sources through which the Roma communities in Cluj-Napoca receive information and the main issues they face. In addition, the necessity of a community platform, such as a community radio, was explored to gauge the impact on both social and digital exclusion.

The second wave (May 9 to June 6, 2023) focused on evaluating the impact of the community radio platform introduced in Stage 1. The aim was to assess whether the platform facilitated access to information, services, and social interaction, and how it contributed to overcoming digital exclusion within the community

4. Results

4.1 Social exclusion of respondents

For the 72 respondents involved in the study, the results indicate significant difficulties in accessing essential services (see *Table 1*), demonstrating the social exclusion of the studied communities. For instance, 82.86% of participants reported major difficulties in accessing sanitary facilities, with the highest percentage being in the Dallas community (88.9%) and the lowest recorded in Meșterul Manole (75%). The National Strategy for Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction (2014 - 2020) mentioned that two-thirds of individuals at risk of poverty and social exclusion lack sanitary facilities.

The issue of a lack of sanitary facilities is a widespread problem faced by Roma communities in Romania. A World Bank report (2014, 154) indicated that approximately 17% of Roma in Romania have access to indoor sanitary facilities (toilet, bathroom, shower), while the rest of the 83% do not, similar to the average of our respondents who reported limited access to sanitary facilities. Issues related to sanitary facilities are often accompanied by difficulties in accessing water and sewage services. On Cantonului Street (86.36%), most respondents identified it as a difficult service to access, while in the Stephenson Zone (30%) and Meșterul Manole (50%), this aspect was less often identified as a difficulty.

Social housing the second most difficult service to access according to respondents, with 68.23% of total respondents. Among the Dallas (88.89%) and Rampa (87.5%) communities, this is one of the most challenging services to access. Issues related to access to social housing are generated by local administrative criteria guiding housing allocation which points based on factors such as the level of education acquired. Individuals with more points have a higher chance of obtaining social housing. These criteria are discriminatory (represents Călian and Rostas 2019, 18) due to the strong correlation between lower points and higher poverty. Therefore, individuals facing poverty and in most need of social housing tend to have a lower level of education and are thereby implicitly excluded from a change to access social housing. Although many respondents (56.75%) claim that access to education is quite easy, most are from Meșterul Manole (75%), followed by Cantonului Street (72.73%), while much less people in Rampa (62.5%) and Dallas (45.44%) report having easy access to education.

Table 1. Initial Access of Respondents (n=72) to Public Services and Resources

	Education (%)	Health (%)	Social Services (%)	Water and Sewerage Services (%)	Social Housing (%)	Sanitary Installations (%)	Electricity (%)
Colina Verde	46.67	46.67	38.89	46.67	66.67	86.67	40
Dallas	55.56	11.11	27.78	55.56	88.89	88.89	77.78

Meşterul Manole	25	50	27.78	62.5	50	75	25
Rampa	62.5	87.5	38.89	87.5	87.5	87.5	75
Strada Cantonului	27.27	36.36	61.11	72.73%	86.36	81.82	72.73
Stephenson	50	30	38.89	40	30	80	0
Total (media)	43.25	43.6	41.67	61	68.23	82.68	49.59

In reality, access to education and social housing is likely more challenging than respondents perceive. For example, regarding education, a recent study (Varga 2021, 238) mentions that children in Pata Rât are enrolled in a segregated school, where over 90% of the school population are Roma, and respondents are unaware that the educational quality in such schools is very poor (Rostas 2017). This aspect is also observed regarding access to healthcare services, where the majority of total respondents (56.4%) consider access to be easy. Almost 90% of respondents from the Dallas community consider access to be easy, while on the other hand, only 22.5% of respondents from the Rampa community consider access to be easy. However, the ease of access to healthcare services is also highlighted in a study conducted by Vincze and Linda (2022), where respondents from the Pata Rât community gave positive responses. Conversely, another study (Varga 2021), interviewing experts who have worked with the community reports that ambulances tend to have significant delays, and medical staff sometimes behave improperly with patients from these communities.

4.2. Digital exclusion of respondents

Digital exclusion in the six communities was measured using the definitions provided by Digby et al (2022) and Barrantes (2007). They specify that digital exclusion should be measured by considering multiple factors such as access to information, technology, and ICT (Information and Communication Technology) skills. By "public interest information," we refer to political information, legal documents and court records, health and public safety information, events hosted by public authorities, and anything else that may be of interest to people (Liambomba, 2023). In the literature (Zhang et al 2019), it is noted that access to Information for poor communities helps reduce poverty by providing information about rights and opportunities, access to education (such as school enrolment), access to healthcare services (Santhirasegaram 2013, 93,).

Regarding our respondents' access to community interest information (see *Table 2*), out of the 158 respondents, the primary mode of accessing this information was not through digital tools and services. Most respondents get informed through friends (122) and/or family (93), while a small number state that they also get informed through television (43), the internet (49), radio (46), or posters (4). In other words, community interest information reaches respondents through word of mouth, as they interact and discuss among themselves, with information reaching them either

through family members or friends. The issue is that access to information through television, internet, and radio substantially reduces poverty, as information reaches people much faster than through direct communication.

Table 2. *Community Interest Information*

Year	Family	Friends	TV	Internet	Radio	Posters
2022	35	53	13	12	13	4
2023	58	69	30	37	33	18
Total	93	122	43	49	46	22

For the 146 respondents involved in the study, the results indicate that digital exclusion is associated with both internet access as well as how access to the internet is used. We agree with Holmes and Burgess (2022, 1) who content that internet access should be evaluated based on the quality of usage, which depends on the level of ICT skills. Among our respondents (see *Table 3*), out of the 146, most used the internet for social networking (105), followed by news (32), entertainment (31), school (2), work (1), and gaming (1), while 18 individuals declared they have no access to the internet. The low levels of internet use for the purposes on following news, for school and work are notable.

Scheerder et al (2017, 168-169) also consider that there are several levels of digital exclusion. The first level is related to people who do and do not have access to the internet; in our case, we have 18 respondents who can be included in this level. People end up not accessing the internet because of extreme poverty. Half of the respondents declared in 2022 that they have difficulties accessing electricity, and from this, we can assume that at least for the same number of respondents, access to the internet is hard to achieve because all devices through which the internet can be accessed require electricity.

The next level is related to competencies and the way internet is used; several studies indicate that there are significant differences in internet usage between the wealthy and the poor (Vallušová et al 2022; Zuo and Hong 2022; Holmes and Burgess 2022). It has been inferred that in poor communities, social networks such as Facebook and Twitter are used more frequently than news consumption, information search, email, or audio streaming (Gibbons et al 2017; Ucar et al 2021). This aspect can also be observed among our respondents: out of the 105 respondents who use the internet daily for this purpose, they access platforms such as Facebook (102), TikTok (87), or YouTube (94), while only a small portion use the internet to watch the news or engage in other activities such as listening to the radio (57). The reason why disadvantaged communities such as the Roma end up using these sites is because they are the easiest to use; furthermore, studies consider that social networks enable traditionally marginalized groups to expand their social networks in new and valuable ways (Mesch 2012, 317). According to Mesch (2012, 74), "minorities and immigrants are more likely to use computer-mediated communication to compensate for their lack of social capital". The consequences of using these platforms such as YouTube or social networks like Facebook or TikTok are that our respondents are more

susceptible to misinformation, as these channels are often used to spread false information (Ucar 2021).

Table 3. Platforms Used Daily by Respondents (n=146)

	Facebok	Tik-Tok	YouTube	Instagram	News	Radio
Daily	102	87	94	42	33	57

4.3. Impact of a Digital Platform on Social and Digital Inclusion

Between the two periods when we administered the surveys, we aimed to assess the potential impact of an online platform like Radio Pata on social and digital inclusion. This radio station was created to be an online platform dedicated to the Roma communities included in the study, with the goal of serving as a tool for social and digital inclusion. Radio Pata provides the community with a space where members can combat stereotypes (Noe 2022, 42), facilitate communication and access to information, support mobility, help combat poverty, and give a voice to the community in the online environment (Mitchell and Lewis 2018, 44-45).

In Table 2, one can observe the increase in community access to information over a one-year interval. The most significant increase is seen in internet usage, from 37 people in 2021 to 49 in the present. Additionally, access to information via radio increased from 33 to 46 people. This suggests that community radio has succeeded in promoting internet usage for information purposes, considering that Radio Pata operates in a streaming format.

We asked respondents in the second round what they liked most about Radio Pata (see Table 5). They most frequently mentioned the information provided (25 respondents), the programs (7), the musical and cultural content (19), and the community character of the radio (7), all of which were highly appreciated. Additionally, respondents were asked to detail two of their responses that indicate community involvement: "It gave us a place where we could have a voice"; "It's at our level, we feel it belongs to us."

Table 4. Reasons for Preference for Radio Pata

Reasons	Number of Mentions
Information Provided	25
Programs	7
Musical and Cultural Content	19
Community Character	7

The community radio also had a remarkable effect on respondents' access to services (see Table 6). More than a year after the initial evaluation of respondents' access to basic services, we found that the information received via Radio Pata had a significant impact. For the 74 respondents in the second evaluation, the online platform significantly helped with access to health services (48 respondents), social housing (46), education (45), social services (42), electricity (30), water and sewerage (29), and sanitary installations (27).

Table 5. In the Last Year, How Much Did Information from Radio Pata Help Respondents (n=74) from the Second Evaluation Access the Following Services

Services	Very Much and Much
Health Services	48
Social Housing	46
Education	45
Social Services	42
Electricity	30
Water and Sewerage	29
Sanitary Installations	27

5. Conclusion

This study acknowledges its limitations and aims to reflect a possible reality rather than a definitive one. Therefore, it cannot conclusively state that the online platform significantly impacted social inclusion. However, it provides a snapshot of Roma communities in Cluj-Napoca, which are known to face social exclusion. This study reveals that they also experience digital exclusion.

Social exclusion among the respondents is evident, as they have limited access to essential services such as healthcare, energy, water, sanitation, and proper sewage systems. Additionally, the community faces digital exclusion, as indicated by their limited access to internet services, information, and the predominant use of the internet for social media purposes. Access to community-relevant information is problematic for the respondents, with the majority relying on offline sources like friends or family, which slows the dissemination of critical information. Digital exclusion is further evidenced by the limited access to electricity, which in turn restricts access to technology and the internet.

The introduction of a digital platform dedicated to the community, such as Radio Pata, was shown to have a positive impact on combating digital exclusion by providing an online space for faster

information dissemination. It also addresses social exclusion by offering a platform that helps the community access services more easily and promotes Roma identity and culture through the information provided.

In conclusion, this study represents a significant effort to shed light on the challenges faced by Roma communities in Cluj-Napoca and to underline the importance of a dedicated digital platform in combatting the digital divide. However, it is crucial that the study be accompanied in the future by similar actions to those undertaken by Radio Pata Rat, as well as by effective policies to address these issues and promote social and digital inclusion.

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