

Roma Inclusion in Europe

Good practice in Montenegro



CENTRE FOR DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS



Mayors Making the Most of EU Funds
for Roma Inclusion (MERI)

Roma Inclusion in Europe - Good practice in Montenegro

PUBLISHER:

Centre for Democracy and Human Rights - CEDEM

FOR THE PUBLISHER:

M. Sc. Nenad Koprivica

PREPARED BY:

Marija Vuksanovic

Nedjeljka Sindik

Kerim Medjedovic

FINAL EDITING:

Nedjeljka Sindik

PREPRESS AND GRAPHIC DESIGN:

Aleksandar Pajević

PRINTED BY:

Mouse

NUMBER OF COPIES:

100

This publication has been produced with the support of Open Society Foundations, through Mayors making the Most for EU Funds for Roma Program (MERI). The content of this publication is the sole responsibility of its authors. Center for Democracy and Human Rights (CEDEM) and the Open Society Foundations are not responsible for the facts and opinions expressed in this publication or for any subsequent use of the information contained therein.

INTRODUCTION

According to data by the Council of Europe, there are about 3.8 million Roma living in the Western Balkans and Turkey. Although the problems Roma community faces in this region are very similar to problems in European Union member countries, such as segregation and marginalization, lack of education, chronic unemployment and limited access to healthcare and social protection, the EU target platform in all these countries is directed to one common goal - to improve the situation of Roma people living in these countries. In this sense, the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies 2020, 10 Common Basic Principles on Roma Inclusion, Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015 as well as national and local inclusion strategies, have one unique function, to support substantial and sustainable integration of Roma.

Lessons learned from previous cycles of the European Union's enlargement are unequivocally indicating that no sustainable integration of Roma is possible without a clear political commitment; adequate financial resources and systematic monitoring and evaluation of the actions undertaken. Above all, the concept of sustainable integration requires better coordination of stakeholders and strengthening of institutional dialogue between national and local authorities on one side and Roma civil society on the other.

The ongoing process of Montenegrin accession to the European Union emphasizes the importance of social inclusion at the local level even more. Namely, local self-governments in multiethnic communities are increasingly exposed to the need of designing and implementing local inclusion strategies and policies. Common denominator of all these policies is contained in a mutual interaction of various local actors as well as in promoting and advancing the integration and establishing of effective mechanisms for the development of local resources. Visible role of local authorities, followed by the process of financial decentralization, may not only induce the process of Roma inclusion, but also contribute to the development of the local-self government system as an important actor of European integration.

This publication is aimed at encouraging and promoting examples of good practice in Roma inclusion at the local level. The publication has been prepared with the support of the **Open Society Foundations from Budapest**, through Mayors Making the Most on EU funds for Roma Program (**MERI**), within the project **Roma Inclusion in Montenegro - Good practice in Montenegro**. The

publication represents the result of the joint work of civil society organizations and municipalities Berane, Bijelo Polje, Niksic, Tivat, Kotor, Budva and Herceg Novi. The project aimed to contribute to strengthening Roma integration at the local level, but also to greater enrolment of local authorities in the implementation of inclusion policies, through the promotion and exchange of local practices of Roma integration at nationwide and EU level.

We hope that this publication will bring closer, to some extent, the daily life of Roma and Egyptian communities and contribute to broadening our perception of Roma realities and defining the guidelines for further work, planning and actions. Moreover, we hope that this publication will move forward the inclusion agenda and encourage other local self-governments and communities towards an active cooperation and constructive dialogue. Finally, the publication serves to remind us once again that we are, as a society and as a country, responsible for enabling Roma community in Montenegro to live under decent human conditions.

Call for Case Nominations

Case Title

**Improving living conditions for
Roma families by providing
residence**



Area
Housing

Country
Montenegro

Municipality
Berane

Mayor of Municipality
Vuka Golubovic

July 2012

Municipal Governance and Roma Inclusion in Europe Lessons from the Field: Case Work - Montenegro

Introduction

In late nineties, during NATO bombing, Berane was one of the centers where people from Kosova fled. A group of 1426¹ persons who fled Kosovo during NATO bombing in 1999 still live in Berane. About 204 of them belong to RAE population. Except that there were about 500 domicile Roma with partly resolved housing situation at settlement Talum. Therefore housing situation was one of the most important issues for RAE population in Berane and for Municipality of Berane one of the key issues to address.

Summary of the case

This case study describes the activities pertaining to the construction of pre-fabricated houses for Roma population in Berane. The activities of the municipality, together with donor and government support, accommodated 220 Roma and Egyptian persons between 2008 and 2012.

General background

Berane is a town in the north east part of Montenegro with a population of 35,452. Out of this total, 0.98% of the population comprises of the Roma and the Egyptians (RE). The municipality is in the process of preparing a “Local Action Plan for Roma Inclusion” through cooperation with local Roma community “Best Practices of Roma Inclusion”² project, which seeks to involve the RE community via civil society work and focus group assessments. Cooperation with the Roma community is established through several projects that are focused on internally displaced persons (IDPs) from Kosovo, and which are mostly implemented in cooperation with international organizations, such as Caritas Luxemburg, Help and UNHCR. Through these projects, the municipality has developed all means of communication at the local level, such as direct meetings with beneficiaries, focus group discussions, meetings with the council, and meetings with leaders and communities at the local level. This practice of good communication and cooperation helped Municipality of Berane and international organizations to

¹ Source BCR 13.01.2011

² “Best Practices of Roma Inclusion” is regional project striving to use best practices implemented in Roma inclusion to assist countries and Roma communities to use them as a model or as an idea to rearrange policies and practices at micro level in order to improve position of Roma in areas of implementing and at local level in municipalities where Roma lives.

implement all their projects in relation with RAE³ population with participation of RAE community which these days resulting with establishing of Local Council of Roma in Berane first of that kind in Montenegro. This Council will have representative and consultative role within Municipality of Berane and will assist Municipality in designing and implementing programmes for Roma. Until now, municipality of Berane had only one person designated for work with Roma issues. This was Advisor for cooperating with civil society, associations and local communities who also covered Roma issues. The municipality is also a recipient of the OSF-MtM (Open Society Foundations-Making the Most of EU Funds for Roma Inclusion) programme for the infrastructure project of water supply, as well as a user of the funds from the Minority Fund for the implementation of this project, both of which will benefit the RE population. Project will start by October. Participation of Municipality will be up to 20 % of grant amount.

The municipality of Berane has also been very active in area of education and social care. In 2010-2011 academic year, the municipality undertook the initiative of mediation between school authorities and parents of RE students, in order to increase school enrollments among the RE community. EU Project" - MONTE NEGRO SERVICES INCLUSIVE EDUCATION "(MIESP) - who started 27th December 2011, funded and managed by the Delegation of the European Commission to Montenegro, implemented by the Ministry of Education and Sports, through the technical support of the Consortium, led by Stan SICI Dominus (Spain), in close cooperation with Municipality of Berane, employed an assistant Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian (RAE) belonging to this community .As the community Berane approved project titled accept others as equals, through the Education for Sustainable Development in the Western Balkans, which is funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland and implemented by the Regional Environmental Center, created the possibility that during the period September 2012-March 2013th Primary School in Radomir Mitrovic funded another Roma assistant. Assistants are responsible for encouraging children RAE for school, working with students RAE / work as teaching assistants; work on preventing dropout RAE students of formal education, and the creation of recommendations for the creation of mechanisms to collect data of RAE children. RAE assistants will be hired by the municipality Berane, but will work under the auspices of the project, collaboration with the Municipality, Primary School Radomir Mitrovic and Roma communities in Berane.

Apart from this, the Mayor of Berane has also designated certain days as "open days" in the municipality, during which inhabitants of Berane can come to the municipality with relevant issues, ideas or requests. These open days are held once a week, and provide a vital channel of communication between the Roma and the municipality. Till date, about 500 single financial aid cases have been facilitated via the open days. The financial aid is mainly provided for basic family needs for health or housing issues.

³ RAE- Roma Askhalia Egyptians

The municipality has also supported families from Riverside and Talam settlements during the extreme weather conditions in the winter season in 2010 and 2012. Inhabitants were evacuated from these areas and were provided with alternate accommodation to shelter them from the snow storms. Supplies, such as wood for heating, and food and hygienic packages were also provided to families residing in these settlements. Municipality provided alternative accommodation and provided meals for accommodated persons and local and international organizations continue to provide hygienic packages, clothes and other types of support to ease municipality to overcome emergency situation. The municipality has regular contact and cooperation with representative offices of UNHCR, UNDP, OSCE, CoE, and implementing partner of OSF-MtM programme in Montenegro. Cooperation and contacts were established in nineties at the time of IDPs fled from Kosova and remain good and effective for 13 years.

Case description

According to the census, 701 domicile Roma and Egyptians live in Berane. During the 1990s, this town was settled by a large number of refugees and IDPs, out of which about 300 belonged to RE population. Most of them were internally displaced persons from Kosovo. At the beginning of their evasion, the municipality of Berane, with the assistance of international organizations such as WORLD VISION and UNHCR, supported building of cottages for displaced Roma. However, WORLD VISION made a contract with the owner of a private property to provide a plot of ground in exchange for 5 year tenant's contract with beneficiaries, and the ownership of cottages following the expiry of the contract. The Commissariat for Displaced Persons (Bureau for refugees), together with the municipality, twice negotiated the extension of the contract until 2008 when the municipality provided a location for a new settlement. Investment was funded from donors through a UNHCR programme and European Commission and 25 prefabricated houses were built by a German organization HELP. The municipality financed all construction activities related to the preparation of the land for building houses, as well as infrastructure related to roads, water supply and electricity connection from their own funds. The project was also supported by Caritas Luxemburg for the construction of the playground for children. Later on, the municipality built 10 more prefabricated houses at the same place. Municipality applied for funds from Fund for minorities in order to build 6 more houses for RE population.

Results and impact

From 2009 to 2012, the Municipality of Berane, in partnership with UNHCR, HELP and Caritas Luxemburg donated and arranged land, prepared infrastructure and provided homes for 220 members of Roma and Egyptian displaced persons from Kosovo and financially supported about 500 families.

Call for Case Nominations

Case Title

Supporting National Roma Inclusion Strategy-Improving Roma housing



Area
Housing

Country
Montenegro

Municipality
Bijelo Polje

Mayor of Municipality
Aleksandar Zuric

July 2012

Municipal Governance and Roma Inclusion in Europe Lessons from the Field: Case Work - Montenegro

Introduction

In Montenegro, municipalities are considered as one of the most relevant actors in Roma inclusion, comprised with tasks which are of direct importance and interest for local citizenship, as well as with the enforcement and protection of constitutionally proclaimed minority rights at the local level. The municipality of Bijelo Polje is recognized among Montenegrin municipalities for its efforts in the overall inclusion of Roma population. During the past years, this municipality implemented a number of initiatives directed towards improving the position of Roma in some of the key social inclusion areas. In addition, the municipality actively cooperates with civil society in order to approach Roma communities. The municipality involves local Roma in decision-making through consultations and group meetings with representatives of Roma settlements and Roma CSOs as well as through field visits, civil initiatives, petitions and civil complaints. So far, representatives of Roma CSOs and Roma settlements have been involved in the preparation of several local inclusion policies, i.e. Social Inclusion Action Plan, Action Plan for Children and Youth as well as in the preparation of the Local Action Plan for Roma inclusion which is currently in the progress. Besides, in 2011, in cooperation with local CSOs, the municipality established the Citizens' Office as part of the local administration, with the aim to make local institutions more transparent and accessible to local people, especially marginalized ones.

Summary of the case

The case described refers to improvement of housing of Roma families living in the territory of the Municipality of Bijelo Polje. It includes provision of plot of the ground; water supply and electricity connection for houses build for 8 Roma families in the settlement Ribarevine. This project is being implemented by the Municipality of Bijelo Polje within the framework of the National Strategy for Roma Integration 2008-2012.

General background

Bijelo Polje is a town at the north east of Montenegro with population of 46 676, out of which 1.56% (334) are Roma who live in three settlements. Unemployment, civil registration, housing and education represent crucial Roma-related concerns. In order to address them, this municipality is building houses for local Roma, providing social benefits for this population and supporting inclusive education of Roma pupils in three local primary schools, i.e. P.S. "Pavle Žižić" in the settlement Njegnjevo, P.S. "Marko Miljanov" settled in the urban centre of Bijelo Polje and the primary school "Risto Ratković" in the settlement Nikoljac. When it comes to Roma participation in local decision-making, members of this community are entitled to use all administrative forms of communication, including individual approach to any service or local administration body. The Department for Social Affairs is comprised with Roma issues, in particular the advisor for health and social care and the advisor for public information and cooperation with NGOs. The municipality also supports Roma inclusion in the field of education and cultural identity protection; allocates funds for local football team E ROMA and provides funds for projects of Roma non-governmental organizations. In 2011, municipality provided 6.400,00 EUR for projects of Roma CSOs, from the local budget sources.

Case description

Among many Roma inclusion initiatives implemented by the municipality Bijelo Polje, project of building housing units for Roma population is of particular importance. Namely, according to the Law on Local Self-Governance, the municipalities are tasked with regulating and ensuring the solution of housing problem for the people in need according to municipal financial capacities. Following the adoption of the National Strategy for RAE inclusion 2008-2012, Municipality of Bijelo Polje participated in the open call of the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights and nominated a housing project intended for 8 Roma families in the settlement Ribarevine. The aim of this project was to build house units for those Roma families who were entitled to use social financial assistance provided by the state and who lived under extremely bad housing conditions. For this purpose, the municipality provided necessary building permits, the location for the building, access to water, electricity, sewerage system and telephone; adequate parking infrastructure as well as supporting technical documentation. The project was implemented by the municipal Directorate for Development and Investment and the contractor 'Hidrogradjevinar' in Niksic,

in cooperation with representatives of Roma living in this settlement. Almost all activities were performed timely and in accordance with the needs of local population. Roma community has been involved in the whole process, through community meetings, monitoring of works and regular visits of local officials and Roma representatives to construction site. The total project value is 150.000,00EUR. The participation of the Municipality consisted approximately 50% of this amount, while the Ministry of Human and Minority rights covered the remaining 50 % of the costs. Within the framework of this project, a facility consisted of 8 housing units have been built. The 3 apartments (2 apartments of 41.60m² and 1 apartment of 55.05m²) are placed in the ground floor of the building and are suitable for small family housing. Upstairs there are the remaining 5 flats of the 58.71 square meters, divided in semi-detached dwellings.

Results and impact

The intervention described here encompasses provision of the ground, water supply and electricity and building apartments for 8 Roma families in the settlement Ribarevine. It has resulted in the building area of approximately 450 square meters, with 500 meters of access roads and a courtyard of about 200 square meters, with a possibility of building a mini sports field for the users of these housing units. The local parliament has recently adopted criteria based on which these housing units will be allocated to Roma beneficiaries. Having in mind that the building is located in a populated urban area which is not segregated, this project is expected to contribute to more successful and rapid integration of the local Roma population. Also, although the building has been primarily intended for Roma population, the expansion of its capacities and its opening towards other beneficiaries of social housing, as envisaged by the local Social Inclusion Action Plan, will also affect the integration of Roma in this local community. This case clearly indicates a commitment of local self-government to work on improving the quality of life of its Roma citizens and to be an active part of the statewide social inclusion plan, thus representing an example of good cooperation between governmental bodies and local authorities as well as between local self-government and Roma community.

Call for Case Nominations

Case Title

Support of Roma employment in Municipality of Budva



Area
Employment

Country
Montenegro

Municipality
Budva

Mayor of Municipality
Lazar Radjenovic

July 2012

Municipal Governance and Roma Inclusion in Europe Lessons from the Field: Case Work - Montenegro

Introduction

In accordance with the “Employment RE population” document¹ from the Employment Agency of Montenegro, the total number of registered unemployment RE people is around 4%. Only 10% of these people are active, which means that they regularly appear in the database of the Employment Agency. They are active to ensure their social and health insurance benefits. Although a small number of RE people are employed in the public institutions, primarily in communal services, most of them obtain their income from the informal economy. Intensive work with RE began in 2004 by training of the Employment Agency’s staff to register and help RE population with this. The Department of Employment in the Employment Agency created several programs aimed at RAE population: literacy courses to increase the level of literacy; small vocational courses for crafts; vocational training; public works (local and state); project “Roma are visible in the labor market”;² the “Second Chance”;³ the project “Reducing vulnerability of domicile RAE”⁴ the project “Creating equal access to jobs for the RAE population”⁵. However all these project and initiatives excluding public works are implemented in the capital Podgorica and municipality of Niksic. Other local self governments where Roma /Egyptians live or Roma /Egyptians from the other municipalities of the coastal south of Montenegro including Budva never benefited this programmes.

Summary of the case

The case described here relates to municipal-led practice of supporting employment of Roma in Budva. It entails activities related support of family Adzovic to increase income as well as support for employment of Roma in public companies in municipality of Budva .

¹ Employment RAE population, Employment Agency of Montenegro, 2010

² Implemented by Employment Agency of Montenegro, “Centre for Development of NGOs” and the Roma organization “Roma Pocetak”

³ Implemented by Employment Agency of Montenegro, Foundation for Roma Scholarship, Center for Professional Education and “DVV International.”

⁴ Implemented by Employment Agency of Montenegro and UNDP

⁵ Implemented by Employment Agency of Montenegro, Coalition of NGOs “Roma Circle” Training Centre ZOPT

General background of situation in Municipality

Budva is town on the south of the Montenegro with population of 18 000 where Roma and Egyptians participate in 1,48% , of total population. Most of populations live in two settlements: Stanisici, out of the town on the road to Cetinje and 20 families at the coast of Jaz in Palestina settlement.

In case of any initiatives members of Roma and Egyptian (RE) population in Budva could approach to Municipality with any initiative, requests, submissions, etc. The department at Municipality in charge of implementation of Roma and Egyptians is Department of Social affairs. Person in charge for RE issues in that department is non Roma and his title is Officer for social and health protection. In Local administration department there is professional position of Assistant for CSOs and Roma issues. Budva was not user of any funding related to Roma and provided modest funds for Roma organizations. In 2011 Municipality provide 1500€ to the Roma and Egyptian Association in Budva.

Case description

The case described here relates to municipal initiative of supporting employment of Roma in primary Budva. It includes all range of support of Roma in employment. In previous years although restrictive legislation and regulation concerning employment in Montenegro persons without citizenship Municipality of Budva maintained number of employed Roma in their local public companies. In most of other towns in Montenegro persons without citizenship terminated contracts with employers on the basis of the new law provisions. In Housing and communal agency of Budva work 54 persons of Roma and Egyptians and all of them has permanent contracts in Water sup collection of recycling materials. On the road to Cetinje in settlement Stanisici live family Adzovic. The family works on collection of recycling materials. The consequence is that they had a lot of scrap metal and other recyclable materials lying around, which was a health hazard and non-environmentally friendly. Ideally this would be addressed, and collected materials should be stored in designated areas. At the beginning this was not the case.

At one point, municipality of Budva recognized need of this family to earn for living using of their best knowledge and skills and efforts to collect materials. Since collection of materials were bigger than selling Municipality decided to mediate between this family and potential buyers and find a few buyers for

the scrap materials. After some time, area around the place of living of family Adzovic was clean of the recyclable materials. Having in mind that with new buyers had to collect more and store more materials Family Adzovic designed one plot, circle it with the fence and stored recyclable materials. In that way they protected their children of different health hazard. After four years family Adzovic developed their business and earned enough to build big house for them. Municipality of Budva did not make a separate project or designate any funding for this activity. It was just simple connecting two interested parties, family Adzovic from one side and buyers of scrap metal from the other side. Even it was one off activity the responsiveness to actual needs of Roma from the side of municipality assisted this family to improve their economic situation and improve living conditions.

Results and impact

At the beginning of this initiative in 2008 family Adzovic lived in small house surrounded by recyclable materials which they collect to earn for living. After intervention of Municipality when provided contacts of the family and recommended them to the few companies for commutation of recyclable materials this family employed all its members, improved economic and housing situation.

Added value of this initiative is that Municipality did not need to spend additional money to support this family to employ their members but with communication and connection of family Adzovic with companies for ransom showed that sometimes small activities can bring certain results.

Call for Case Nominations

Case Title

Providing institutional support for Roma CSOs



Area
Cooperation with CSOs

Country
Montenegro

Municipality
Herceg Novi

Mayor of Municipality
Dejan Mandic

July 2012

Municipal Governance and Roma Inclusion in Europe Lessons from the Field: Case Work - Montenegro

Introduction

Pursuant to normative framework, municipalities in Montenegro have the responsibility to foster integration of socially excluded groups in accordance with its capabilities, in particular to take part in assuring conditions and improvement of health care, housing, communal order, education, social and child care, entrepreneurship development, employment and other areas of interest to the local population. Although the situation varies from one municipality to another, local self-governments are undertaking interventions that target the inclusion of Roma population. In part of the southern region of Montenegro, these efforts have been shaped into the local inclusion policies which tend to tackle Roma needs encountered at local level. During past years, the municipality of Herceg Novi implemented a number of intervention in the area of Roma integration, most of which were of sporadic nature, pertaining mostly to social welfare. Since 2005, the municipality has been involved in Roma Decade implementation along with other Montenegrin municipalities. In 2009, in order to create a framework for a more integrated and sustainable Roma inclusion, the municipality of Herceg Novi, as the other two local self-governments in this region, adopted the Local Action Plan on Roma Inclusion. This local action plan involves a set of priorities and concrete measures aiming at improving the status of Roma and Egyptian population in Herceg Novi, their integration in the local community, as well as the creation of basic prerequisites for their human rights implementation. The local self-government involves local Roma in shaping and implementation of local policies through public hearings, civil complaints, petitions and initiatives. Besides, the municipality performs regular contacts and cooperation with other municipalities inhabited with Roma, Roma CSOs and representative offices of UNHCR, UNDP and OSCE Mission to Montenegro.

Summary of the case

This case study concerns multi-year institutional support, provided by the municipality Herceg Novi, for the benefit of one of the most active Roma CSOs in the southern region of Montenegro, i.e. Young Roma. This initiative is fully in line with the objectives of Local Action Plan for Roma Inclusion. Its aim is to tackle the problem of insufficiently developed capacities of Roma civil society

in this municipality. This support entailed institutional grants for the only existing Roma civil society organization in this locality, providing support for rent and maintaining of office. Given thanks to this support, the organization concerned obtains necessary funds for the rent, thus being able to focus more on the work with the community as well as on the implementation and monitoring of local inclusion policies.

General background

Herceg Novi is a town in southwest of Montenegro with population of 30 864. Roma and Egyptian population participates with 0.93%. In 2009, municipality Herceg Novi adopted the Local Action plan on Roma Inclusion (LAP. This Local Action Plan deals with legal, economic, social, educational, cultural and other aspects of everyday life of this population. LAP was adopted in a participative manner, in partnership with local CSO Young Roma. The process included assessment of Roma community needs, focus groups, meetings in community, personal meetings as well as meetings with CSO representatives that was implemented by CSO Mladi Romi and funded by Foundation for Open Society. Following the adoption of LAP, the cooperation between municipal authorities and Roma CSOs has been significantly improved. Roma CSOs used the institute of "empty chair" during the adoption of Local Action Plan at local parliament session. In addition, starting from 2013, Herceg Novi will also be involved in part of the MtM program in Montenegro, through participation in local inclusion project that deals with development of local Roma housing study.

Case description

The cooperation between the municipality Herceg- Novi and local Roma CSO Young Roma started at first with the implementation of local small scale projects, thus growing through cooperation on civil registration of Roma and the development of Local Action Plan for Roma Inclusion. Over years, the municipality recognized this Roma CSO as a credible and accountable partner which contributed for Roma needs to be better recognized and addressed through local policy-making. Moreover, this organization has profiled itself as one of the main partners of the municipality when it comes to the implementation and monitoring of local inclusion policies. At this moment, not only one local inclusion project is being undertaken without the involvement of this organization. Having in mind the importance of this partnership on one side and the severity

of problems Roma civil society face in order to exist and work, on the other, municipal authorities, at their own initiative, came to a decision to provide certain amount of money for the benefit of CSO Young Roma. Pursuant to this decision, municipality financed space rent and administration costs for the organization, in the amount of 3 300€ in 2009. In 2010 the funds decreased to 2 200€ while at 2011 and 2012 these funds were 900€ per year. The municipality performed monitoring of the work of Young Roma, based on the annual reports of this organization.

Results and impact

The case study of institutional support of Young Roma entails providing basic financial sustainability of this CSO. This support relaxed the organization of providing additional money for rent as well as of the need to change location, providing at the same time enough possibility for this CSO to dedicate to its Roma-related work. Over years, Young Roma has become widely recognized for its work and commitment not only among the local Roma community, but moreover among state institutions and international organizations as well. During these years, Young Roma implemented about 50 projects and initiatives for the benefit of local Roma people, relating mostly to personal documentation, education and improvement of Roma participation in local decision-making. Young Roma and the municipality jointly organized several events aimed to promote cultural identity and distinctiveness of Roma. In 2006, municipal authorities and Young Roma developed a joint project of opening a Roma Centre Office aimed to foster understanding, identifying and overcoming of the problems and needs of the Roma community. Through this Roma Centre, in three years Young Roma has helped more than 200 domiciles Roma in the regulation of new Montenegrin citizenship and identity cards. Mladi Romi, through this project, supported by UNDP has solved 223 cases and obtained over 5 000 documents for a period of 3 years. In cooperation with the municipality, Young Roma conducted needs assessment during the preparation of LAP, thus ensuring that the needs of Roma people are encountered in this local policy document. This CSO also participated in the preparation of the newly adopted National Roma Inclusion Strategy for 2012-2016. In addition, representatives of this CSO are involved in MtM program in Montenegro, through Project Generation Facility as well as in development of local Roma housing study, along with municipal authorities. Following these facts, it is clear that this case is not only about the financial support of Roma CSO. It is more an example of good cooperation and understanding between municipal authorities and grassroots organization which gathered around the same objectives. As such, this case sends a very important message

in Montenegro' local context, that local partnerships represent a way on how to ensure both citizen participation and rational allocation of funds, but moreover on how to develop joints interventions for the benefit of local population. The fact that this kind of support has been established at the initiative of the municipality and that it is not prescribed by the law as an obligation of the municipality brings an added value to this case, thus serving as an example of good practice which may be multiplied in other localities.

Call for Case Nominations

Case Title

Building houses for Roma LAP implementation

Area
Housing

Country
Montenegro

Municipality
Kotor

Mayor of Municipality
Marija Catovic

July 2012



Municipal Governance and Roma Inclusion in Europe Lessons from the Field: Case Work - Montenegro

Introduction

During past years, the municipality of Kotor implemented a number of activities aimed at improving the position of Roma, in accordance with its competencies and financial capacities. Namely, following the Strategy for improving the situation of Roma population 2008-2012 that has been adopted by the Government of Montenegro within the “Decade of Roma”, this municipality worked actively on the tasks that have been put before it as one of the actors involved in the implementation of the Decade. This involvement entailed mostly the provision of social benefits, support to Roma education and improving housing for Roma. For the purpose of Decade implementation, a Memorandum of Understanding and Cooperation has been signed between municipalities Kotor and Tivat on one side and UN Country Team in Montenegro on the other. The Municipality of Kotor is one of the three municipalities in the southern region of Montenegro that have adopted the Local Action Plan for the improvement of Roma Integration. This Plan was developed in 2011 in cooperation with Municipality of Tivat and two Roma CSOs: Young Roma and local Association of Roma and Egyptians, with the support of Open Society Foundation Office in Podgorica. Municipal Advisor for cultural heritage, minorities and elderly people as the person in charge for Roma integration issues, is responsible for the implementation of the Action Plan, along with respective municipal secretariats comprised with housing, infrastructure, social and health care.

Summary of the case

The case described refers to Roma housing in the settlement Lovanja. It is aimed at improving living conditions for 8 Roma families living in this settlement. It includes providing plot of the ground; preparation of necessary technical documentation; building of 8 pre-fabricated houses for Roma families as well as provision of water supply and electricity connection for these houses. This project represents a joint venture of Municipality of Kotor and Public Communal Company which is funded by the municipality and tasked with ensuring the communal order in the territory of this municipality. This intervention has been initiated with the aim to solve housing situation of Roma, most of whom are employed in the aforementioned public company.

General background

Kotor is situated on southwest of Montenegro and inhabited by the population of 22 799, out of which 1.06 % are Roma and Egyptians. There are 39 families of domicile Roma living in the territory of Kotor, while Ashkali and Egyptian communities consist a total number of 171 member families, out of which 7 families are displaced from Kosovo and Metohija, while 21 of them have the status of "foreigners with the permanent residence in Montenegro."

The municipality of Kotor actively cooperates with government agencies, NGOs and other municipalities in order to support Roma integration in different fields. Municipality provides transportation and free monthly travel participation for local Roma pupils who regularly attend school classes. Also, each year local government provides school supplies for Roma elementary school students. Local self-government also provides a set of social benefits and ad hoc social assistance in food supplies, clothing and money to local Roma population, on the basis of individual requests. Also, the municipality provides support in the field of Roma housing that has been recognized by the Local Action Plan as one of the most important problems to be solved. In order to tackle this situation, local authorities provided provisional accommodation for several Roma families in the camp-sites Dobrota, Dobrota-Prvoborac and Kavač-Lovanja. They also implement several activities on the reconstruction and building of houses for Roma residents, in particular in the settlement Lovanja which is characterized by a very poor state of both housing and access roads. In addition, local authorities are occasionally undertaking repair and tamping of the gravel roads that lead to the village Lovanja.

Case description

During past years, the Municipality of Kotor together with Public Communal Company undertook several infrastructural projects in the area of Roma housing. This case study deals in particular with building of 8 prefabricated houses for Roma families living in the settlement Lovanja, which is situated in the neighbourhood of the General Hospital Kotor and inhabited by 28 people gathered in 8 households. In addition to housing, it deals with a set of activities referring to infrastructure – reconstruction of roads, provision of water supplies, sanitation and electricity for residents of the settlement concerned.

The problem of Lovanja appeared due to the need to expand the capacity of the city hospital and therefore to dislocate a number of Roma families from their

place of living. In order to solve this problem, based on the Decision on Persons in need of Housing, Municipality of Kotor provided 110 000 € for building of houses and infrastructure in this settlement. The intervention has been designed in the cooperation with local Roma people, who were represented by Roma leaders-representatives of the settlements through community consultations. Public communal company participated in this project with the amount of 40 000€. For all of these facilities, municipality provided necessary documentation, i.e. local permission for the construction, construction project, permissions for electricity and water supply connections as well as local taxes for communal equipment of construction land. Besides, the municipality provided complete utility infrastructure as well as ongoing maintenance which entail regular maintenance and repairs of house equipment. In addition to houses built, municipality provided 3 containers as temporary housing solution for three Roma families who lived under extremely bad housing conditions.

Also, during the past years, municipal authorities implemented several interventions in order to improve the quality of living for Roma in the location Lovanja. Several new reservoirs for drinking water and disinfection as well as several facilities for microbial processing of existing reservoirs have been provided. In order to ensure regular water supply to all homes in this Roma settlement, a total number of seven reservoirs for drinking water with the capacity of around 20,000 liters of water have been provided by the municipal Water Supply Company and put in function, although there are still occasional interruptions in supply due to the disappearance of fresh water from the hydrants during the summer season. The municipal Directorate for building provided reconstruction of the water canal near Lovanja in order not to devastate the accessing road which was covered by large quantity of trash from the nearest dump. The total amount of this investment, including the aforementioned housing intervention, was 200 000€.

Results and impact

The intervention described here encompasses one the main objectives of the Local Action Plan for Roma Integration, i.e. to improve the quality of Roma housing. It has resulted in improved living conditions for eight Roma families, while three Roma families were provided with provisional accommodation what represents a better housing solution of those they previously had. In addition, it deals with the improvement of water supply for the residents of this settlement.

Despite the lack of the formal monitoring mechanism, the feedback from Roma people has been collected through field visits and community consultations that have been held prior to project start as well as during its implementation. From the very beginning of the project as well as after it has been completed, representatives of the municipality conducted regular visits to the settlement, communicating with Roma residents in order to get direct insight into living conditions on the ground and to solve current problems according to the needs of the beneficiaries. They also held regular meetings with Roma CSOs: Association of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians - REA Kotor, Young Roma from Herceg Novi, the Association of Egyptians from Tivat, as well as with representatives of the National Roma Council. Those visits and meetings have been followed by specific interventions designed in accordance with the needs of the local people. Moreover, these meetings enabled representatives of these entities to play a significant role in monitoring of the situation in the field.

Having in mind these facts, this case represents an example of good inter-municipal and inter-sectoral cooperation. Moreover, this intervention represents an example of more integrated approach since it has linked Roma housing and employment. Namely, the intervention aimed, *inter alia*, to ensure better housing for Roma who are employed in one of the municipal enterprises. Since it has rounded the solution of the two biggest problems residents of Lovanja face: unemployment and housing, this intervention is expected to foster more sustainable integration of Roma living in this settlement. As such, it indicates how a difference can be made in the field of Roma inclusion if the municipality has a clear participatory strategic framework as well as the political will to address these problems and to involve local stakeholders. By this intervention, the municipality of Kotor clearly promoted positive approach towards Roma inclusion which made this local self-government visible and recognizable enough to be a partner to both national Government and international partners as well. The fact that the housing has been recognized by the mid-term LAP as one of prioritized problems, contributes to programmatic and financial sustainability of this intervention, along with the participation of the municipality in the implementation of the National Roma Inclusion Strategy 2012-2016, which also targets housing as one of the key Roma inclusion areas.

Call for Case Nominations

Case Title

Improving living conditions for Roma families by providing residence



Area
Housing

Country
Montenegro

Municipality
Niksic

Mayor of Municipality
Nebojsa Radojicic

July 2012

Municipal Governance and Roma Inclusion in Europe Lessons from the Field: Case Work - Montenegro

Introduction

Municipality of Niksic exerts active sanding and role regarding specific issues such as participation, inclusion of marginalized groups, social policies etc. especially towards endangered groups. On the line of this policy, after many activities on for benefit of Roma population implemented in close collaboration with civil society, during 2007 and 2008, there was created and adopted the Local plan of action for RAE inclusion for the period 2008 – 2015. LAP is consistent with the following policies: Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy, National Action Plan for the Roma Decade, Law on minority rights and freedoms and Strategy for improvement the status of the RAE population in Montenegro 2008 – 2012. Niksic was the first Municipality in Montenegro to adopt such a plan. Local Action Plan for RAE Inclusion proscribes that 40000 euro will be dedicated each year from the municipal budget to the activities for its realization. This LAP was developed in Niksic as pilot action.

It was an Municipal initiative constructed on the basis of research done by NVO „Početak“ in cooperation with Center for Social Work for Niksic, Savnik and Pluzine and supported by USA Embassy in Montenegro. The local action plan represents a comprehensive set of priorities and concrete measures and activities aiming for improvement of the status of RAE population in Niksic, their integration in the local community and creation of basic prerequisites for their basic human rights implementation. The priorities of the Local Action Plan deals with legal, economic, social, educational, cultural and other aspects of RAE life, and the case study to be presented, is deriving from the priority related to housing.

Housing – direct living conditions is one of the most important aspects, having in consideration the current situation. The fact is that, out of 186 RAE families with 936 members, 176 families, or 94,62%, lives in separate settlements – suburbs, that are practically ghettos. These settlements are deprived of water supply system, asphalt streets, sewage systems, street lightning, waste disposal containers, and with very few public drinking water fountains. In these settlements there are many illegal garbage dumps. The situation worsened during 90ties with a flux of refugees and repatriated families - 60 families with 361 members. Number of families that have their own house (legally or illegally

constructed) or apartments is 24 – 12,89%. Others live in types of emergency accommodation such as tents or huts. One illustrative figure is that 46,77% of families do not have water inside the living space. The average RAE family in Niksic is the most numerous in Montenegro: 6.4 members.

Summary of the case

This case study describes the activities pertaining to the construction of houses for Roma population in Niksic, and the creation of legal and other prerequisites for dealing with habitation problem. The activities of the municipality, along with donor and government support accommodated 4 Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian (RAE) families in 2008, 3 families in 2009 and 9 families in 2012.

General background

Niksic is a town in the central part of Montenegro with 72,824 inhabitants, out of whom 1.29% are Roma and Egyptians. The municipality adopted the Local Action Plan for Roma Inclusion in 2008 using participatory approach that is, it involved RE community through civil society work and focus groups assessment. Currently, there is no person appointed to work with the Roma within the local administration, however, the municipality will designate a professional position for the same by the end of 2012. The municipality has regular contact and cooperation with representative offices of UNHCR, UNDP, OSCE, CoE, and implementing partner of MtM programme in Montenegro. The municipality is also a beneficiary of the OSF-MtM programme for the infrastructure project of water supply. This project developed in partnership with CSOs CEDEM and Humanitarac will improve living conditions in settlement mainly inhabited by Roma. Participation of municipality in project funding is 28% of total amount of the project.

The municipality of Nikšić exerts active influence and has an important role in specific issues such as participation, inclusion of marginalized groups, and social policies. In tandem with this, the municipality implemented many activities for the benefit of the Roma population, in close collaboration with civil society during 2007 and 2008. Most of these project were focused at ensuring schoolbooks for children through CSOs, improvement of the living conditions (regulation of settlements, garbage collection, improvement of hygienic conditions etc.) Subsequently, it drafted and adopted the "Local Plan of Action for RAE In-

clusion" (LAP) for the period 2008 – 2015. LAP is consistent with the following policies: Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy, National Action Plan for the Roma Decade, Law on Minorities' Rights and Freedom, and Strategy for Improvement the Status of the RAE population in Montenegro 2008 – 2015. Nikšić was the first municipality in Montenegro to adopt such a plan. Local Action Plan for RAE Inclusion prescribes that 40,000 euro will be dedicated each year from the municipal budget to the activities for its realization. Yet these funds were allocated for CSOs dealing with Roma issues were not provided to the organizations due to budget restrictions, different priorities etc. What is significant is the fact that a much better approach at the local level, for implementation of Local action plans for Roma is to set aside a certain percentage of the budget that will be compatible with possible budget projections than the municipality to determine the allocation of a fixed amount of funds that the municipality is not always able to provide.

The Local Action Plan is a municipal initiative, constructed on the basis of research done by NVO "Početak", in cooperation with the "Center for Social Work for Nikšić, Šavnik and Plužine", supported by the Embassy of USA in Montenegro. It represents a comprehensive set of priorities, and concrete measures and activities aiming for improvement of the status of RAE population in Nikšić, their integration with the local community and creation of basic prerequisites for their basic human rights implementation. The priorities of the Local Action Plan deals with legal, economic, social, educational, cultural and other aspects of RAE life, and the case study presented, derives from the priority related to housing.

Housing – direct living conditions is one of the most important aspects, having in consideration the current situation. The fact is that, out of 186 RE families with 936 members, 176 families, or 94.62%, lives in separate settlements – suburbs, which are practically ghettos. These settlements are deprived of water supply system, asphalt streets, sewage systems, street lighting, waste disposal containers, and with very few public drinking water fountains. In these settlements, there are many illegal garbage dumps. The situation worsened during 1990s with a flux of refugees and repatriated families – 60 families with 361 members. Out of these, only 24 families (comprising 12.89%) have their own house (legally or illegally constructed) or apartments. The rest live in other types of emergency accommodation such as tents or huts. One illustrative figure is that 46.77% of families do not have water inside the living space. The average RE family in Niksic is the most numerous in Montenegro - comprising 6.4 members. These settlements present a fertile space for all kind of diseases, crime and misconduct. One of the ways to deal with these problems is the provision of housing for some of the RE families.

Case description

In 2008, the municipality of Niksic donated and arranged land for 6 RAE families repatriated from the European Union, and additionally provided 30% of construction material for 4 of those. Then, upon the provisions of Local Action Plan for Roma, the Municipality of Niksic constituted a Commission that conducted a research and analysis in order to establish the current state of housing, living conditions, legal status of objects, ownership, and other needs of the RAE population with regard to housing. Subsequently, in 2008, 3 prefabricated houses were built for 2 families that the Commission estimated to be in greatest need for housing. Out of this, one house was built for the family of a meritorious athlete. This sportsmen's house was financed completely by Niksic Municipality. Total investment was 72.500,00 € worth, out of which Niksic Municipality contributed 38.772,00 €.

In 2011, 3 houses with 9 apartments were constructed and 9 local Roma families moved in. The total investment was worth 200.000,00 €. These actions were in line with the Local Action Plan for Roma and were financed partly by (i) the municipality (one house in 2008 completely financed by Municipality of Niksic) through provision of the land, local planning and construction works, and tax exemption; and partly by (ii) the National Budget , which stands in line with the Strategy for improving the status of the RAE population in Montenegro 2008 – 2015. NGO "Susreti" contributed 5000 € donation to the latter one.

For 2013, the construction of another building with 5 apartments is planned, in similar partnership constellation. The Local Action Plan is being implemented through described cases, other activities and the Niksic Municipality NGO financing scheme (which will be implemented in future).

Results and impact

From 2008 to 2012, the Municipality of Niksic, donated and arranged land for 6 RAE families repatriated from European Union, provided construction material for 4 of those, provided 3 prefabricated houses for 2 families and 9 apartments where 9 local Roma families moved in. Houses are built in the larger city area in settlement Humci .Settlement is close to the all administrative offices as well as primary schools health centre and faculties.

Call for Case Nominations

Case Title

Support education of Roma in Municipality of Tivat

Area
Education

Country
Montenegro

Municipality
Tivat

Mayor of Municipality
Dragan Kankaras

July 2012



Municipal Governance and Roma Inclusion in Europe Lessons from the Field: Case Work - Montenegro

Introduction

Municipality of Tivat is so nineties was a municipality with a population of 11,186 and mostly fully integrated Roma. From 1991 to 1999 due to the war in the neighboring countries a large number of refugees and displaced persons fled to this municipality. Given the long nineties were years of inflation, falling living standards and economic decline, it was very difficult to qualitatively integrate a large number of people. During the Kosovo war in 1998 and 1999 significant number of Roma and Egyptians fled to this municipality. In first year of their residence in Montenegro Ministry of education did not receive them into schools due to lack of recognition of diplomas obtained at Kosovo educational institutions. After 2000 policy changed but it was very hard to improve situation and encourage parents (previously discouraged and rejected by Ministry of education) to enroll their children into schools.

Summary of the case

The case described here relates to municipal-led practice of supporting primary schooling of Roma in Tivat. It entails organization of local transport for Roma pupils from their settlement "7 July" and "Lovanja" to primary schools at the territory of Tivat. At the policy level, this activity is envisaged as one of the measures of the Local Action Plan for Roma Integration and therefore funded from the local budget. It is being implemented for two years already, in cooperation with the local association of Egyptians.

General background

Tivat is town on the southwest of the Montenegro with population of 14111. Roma and Egyptians participate in 2.64% of total population. Municipality prepared Local action plan for Roma in cooperation with CSO Young Roma and Association of Egyptians and adopted it in 2011. Two main issues concerning Roma and Egyptians in this municipality are illegal settlements and related to that issues concerning connection to water supply, electricity, ownership of the property etc. Since most of the RE members are internally displaced persons

Municipality of Tivat applied through Sarajevo process for social housing project in order to close illegal settlement and support social inclusion of IDP RE population live in Tivat.

In case of any initiatives members of RE population in Tivat could approach to Municipality with any initiative, requests, submissions, etc. The department at Municipality in charge of implementation of Local Action Plan for Roma and Egyptians is Department of Social affairs. Person in charge for RE issues in that department is non Roma and his title is Assistant for CSOs and Roma issues. Cabinet of the Mayor and relevant social department has open approach in work on RE issues and willing to cooperate with all relevant stakeholders in implementation of Local action plan for RE population and developing new project ideas. Municipality has regular contact and cooperation with representative offices of UNHCR, UNDP, OSCE, CoE, and implementing partner of MtM programme in Montenegro.

Case description

The case described here relates to the municipal-led practice of supporting primary schooling of Roma in Tivat. It entails organization of local transport for Roma pupils from their settlement "7 July" to primary schools at the territory of Tivat. At the policy level, this activity is envisaged as one of the measures of the Local Action Plan for Roma Integration and therefore funded from the local budget. It is being implemented for two years already, in cooperation with the Local Association of Egyptians.

The added value of this initiative lies in the fact that primary schooling does not fall within the scope of municipal responsibility and competences. However, regardless this fact, municipal authorities have recognized the necessity to design and implement such initiative in order to meet Roma needs in the field of education and facilitate this segment of Roma inclusion from the local level. In order to deliver this kind of support, the local self-government of Tivat conducts a public procurement procedure each year in order to select the best bidder who will be contracted for local transport. The responsiveness to actual needs of Roma parents and pupils is ensured through interviews with Roma community members, which are conducted on a regular basis by the abovementioned local NGO and the municipal Roma coordinator as well. The most important success is that more students stay in school, do not leave it to a new generation and the number of children enrolled in school increases. Also a number of parents who had resistance to enroll children in school have changed their mind toward schooling as result of mediation of the RE population representative participating in the project.

This activity started in 2007 as support to the 7 children living in settlement of Lovanja (which is located at the border of the two municipalities of Tivat and Kotor) to attend the school. In 2008, UNICEF extended its support to this initiative of the municipality by providing it a car with 7 seats to transport children to school. Since the jeep provided by UNICEF was expensive to maintain – in terms of its service costs and driver's allowance – the municipality decided to post a tender for transportation services and hired a local private transport company 'Zoranic' to transport children to school and back home. The municipality also provided school books, bags and clothes for children attending school. In the subsequent year, the municipality included the settlement '7 July' and children from this settlement into the transport services sponsored by the municipality, which substantially increased its costs. The municipality, hence, could not provide clothes for pupils anymore. Today, the transportation services subsume 105 Roma and Egyptian children from the settlements of 'Lovanja' and '7 July'. It also covers 15 Roma and Egyptian children from another locations (Gradišnica, Lastva, Seljanovo etc.), who benefit from social assistance and transport services provided by different agencies in their own area, which nonetheless is financially sponsored by the Municipality of Tivat.

In 2011, the Municipality of Tivat adopted the 'Local Action Plan for Roma Integration 2011-2015' and incorporated its existing activities into the plan. Further, these were enhanced by initiating new activities such as monitoring dropouts and mediating activities by appointed members of local association. These activities included cooperation of Roma/Egyptian appointed person with primary school, Municipality and parents in order to control number of children going to school and advising parents and supporting them in order to prevent drop out. The municipality designated 2 500 EUR on yearly basis to the Association of Egyptians from Tivat, for monitoring educational activities and providing transport services to school. The Association appointed one Roma/Egyptian person as the local coordinator for these activities. Since then, this amount is a regular part of the municipality budget every year for these activities.

Most activities of such nature are usually developed by the Strategy for improving the position of the Roma, Askhali and Egyptian (RAE) communities (2008-2012), or the Strategy for improving the position of Roma and Egyptians (2012-2016). They are also supported by the Action Plan supported by the Ministry of Education and Sports, and are an integral focus of some projects developed by civil society organizations from other municipalities, in partnership with the Roma Education Fund (REF). However, the municipality of Tivat, together with the Local Association of Egyptians, found its own way to support the education of Roma and Egyptians using its own local budget.

Results and impact

At the beginning of this initiative in 2007, the municipality provided transport for 7 children from "Lovanja" settlement. Today this kind of transport benefits 105 Roma and Egyptian children from settlements "Lovanja" and "7th July", and also covers 15 Roma and Egyptian children from another locations (Gradisnica, Lastva, Seljanovo etc.), who benefit from social assistance and transport services provided by different agencies in their own area, which nonetheless is financially sponsored by the Municipality of Tivat. This service is not only improved access to education to members of the RE population already affected by the changes in the community in terms of increasing interest to parents RE population of school enrollment and better inclusion of children RE population in general. At the beginning of the intervention Municipality intended to assist only the 7 most vulnerable Roma children and help them to continue schooling. This intervention helped these 7 students to continue schooling as well as 120 in total and increased number of beneficiaries for 17 times in five years of implementing initiative. The support in education is also enhanced by the provision of books and transport for the mediator who takes care of attendance and cooperates with the school, municipality and parents. In cooperation with CSOs, the municipality is planning to develop this program of support in education further in the next period.