WP3 Mutual learning on Roma housing and participation

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R-HOME. Roma: Housing, Opportunities, Mobilisation and Empowerment. WP2 Report

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INTRODUCTION

The aim of this booklet is to provide a summary on lessons learnt from some selected housing practices that are targeting the Roma directly or indirectly in some selected areas of France, Italy, Hungary, Romania and Spain, within the project "R-HOME: Roma: Housing, Opportunities, Mobilisation and Empowerment", funded by the Rights, Equality and Citizenship (REC) program of the EU and covering France, Italy, Hungary, Romania and Spain.

The analysed projects and programs have been selected with the aim to provide best or good practices, but due to the complexity of the programs, the label "best or good practice" can often be applicable to some key elements only and not necessarily to the entire initiatives, and therefore some of the selected practices are not "best/good practice" per se. Moreover, as the entire R-HOME project is focusing on some selected metropolitan areas of the five participating countries (the wider metropolitan areas of Paris, Milan, Miskolc, Targu Mures and Barcelona), these practices were also selected from these areas, which limited the pool of potential practices to be selected as "best or good practices". This research design also allows us to provide some overall rather "unsatisfactory practices", which is also a highly important source of inspiration to learn what to avoid in case of similar initiatives (whose planning is underway).

The booklet is based on 14 practices from the five metropolitan areas and aims to present relevant and remarkable practices and successful projects of Roma housing and improved living conditions with positive experiences of Roma integration in the neighbourhood and of Roma participation in political, civil and cultural life, also through Roma associations, by highlighting the key factors favouring or hampering Roma active citizenship and social and civil involvement in their community. Furthermore, the project aims to identify comprehensive programs that cover not only housing, but more areas of integration as the vulnerability and poverty cycle of the Roma is reinforced by the complex interaction between disadvantageous and discriminatory situations in employment, education, access to health and public services, and can be influenced by both empowerment and anti-discrimination program elements.

The selected projects have been presented and evaluated in detail in a template that covers a wide range of aspects (see Methodology in section 2). The booklet is based on the findings derived from these 14 cases (3-3 practices from France, Italy, Hungary, Romania and 2 from Spain), the information for which was collected between October 2020 and April 2021.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The booklet aims to present and summarize the main findings and lessons of 14 Roma housing "best/good" practices that have been or are currently running in five metropolitan areas of five EU member states (France - Paris, Italy - Milan, Hungary - Miskolc, Romania - Targu Mures and Spain - Barcelona) over the past two decades, mainly in the 2010s. The practices target directly or indirectly the housing improvement of the local Roma population and are usually embedded into a comprehensive program by covering more areas of integration in order to address the vulnerability of the Roma with a more effective approach.
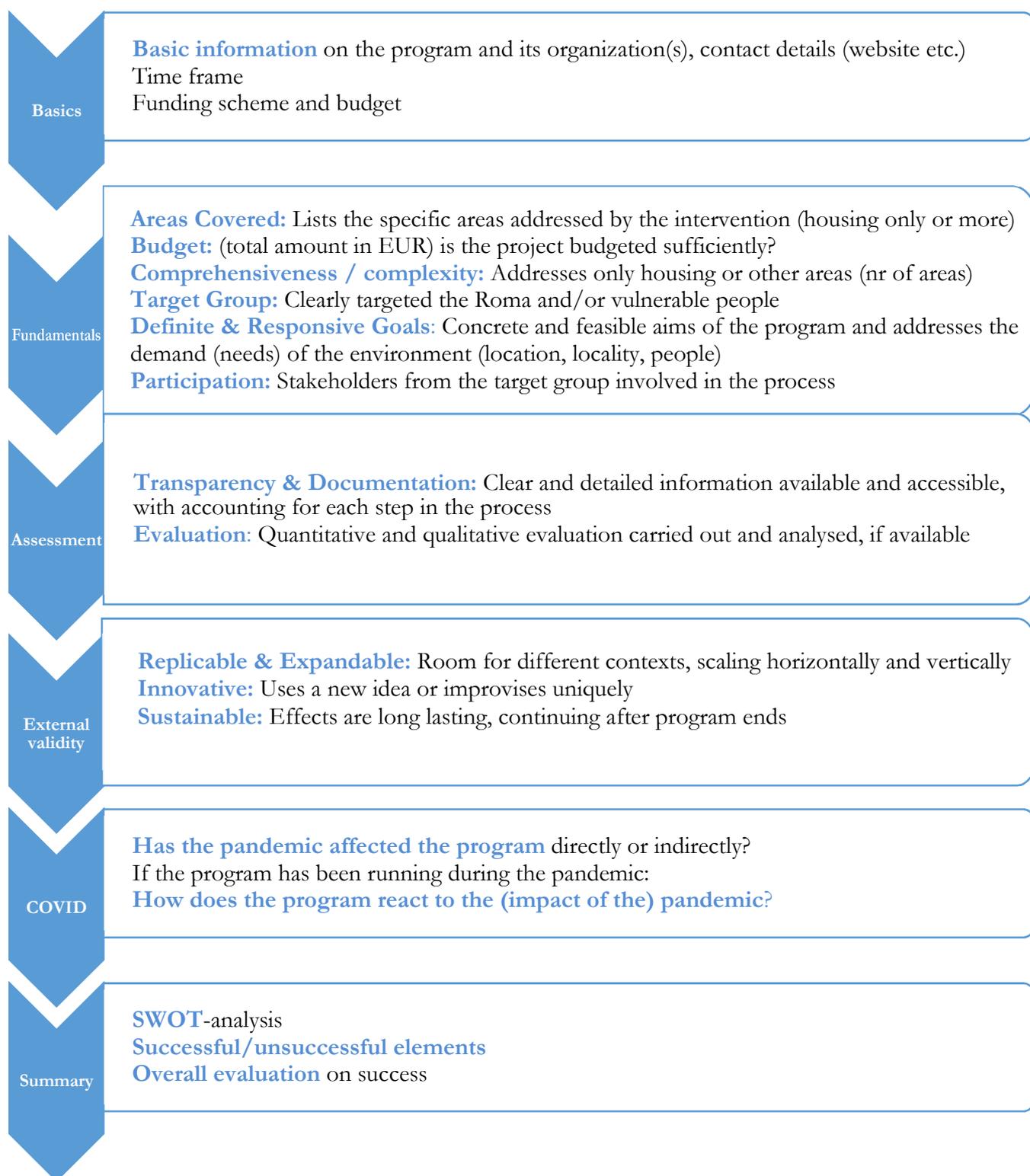
Box 1: How the cases were selected

The first aspect was that the selected project should be implemented in the region of the participating partners, and that the partners should have insight and information about the evaluated projects. An important aspect was that the initiative should be at least partially successful, i.e., it would be possible to identify good practice in at least some of their activities and methods, which could be adapted in other places (aspect 3). The next selection criterion was complexity, i.e., the project should not only deal with the infrastructural aspect of housing. Finally, timing was also an important consideration as we tried to study projects that were still running but had already completed some elements. The earliest project launched began in 2003.

The selected practices were explored by using a template to gather the required data and information as well as carry out the evaluation of the program from several aspects. The template provided a common understanding and the ground for comparison of the different cases. The topics and assessment aspects that were followed in each case study to summarize and evaluate the practice are presented herein.

R-HOME

The aspects of the best/good practice template to collect information and to evaluate the practice

Basics

Basic information on the program and its organization(s), contact details (website etc.)
Time frame
Funding scheme and budget

Fundamentals

Areas Covered: Lists the specific areas addressed by the intervention (housing only or more)
Budget: (total amount in EUR) is the project budgeted sufficiently?
Comprehensiveness / complexity: Addresses only housing or other areas (nr of areas)
Target Group: Clearly targeted the Roma and/or vulnerable people
Definite & Responsive Goals: Concrete and feasible aims of the program and addresses the demand (needs) of the environment (location, locality, people)
Participation: Stakeholders from the target group involved in the process

Assessment

Transparency & Documentation: Clear and detailed information available and accessible, with accounting for each step in the process
Evaluation: Quantitative and qualitative evaluation carried out and analysed, if available

External validity

Replicable & Expandable: Room for different contexts, scaling horizontally and vertically
Innovative: Uses a new idea or improvises uniquely
Sustainable: Effects are long lasting, continuing after program ends

COVID

Has the pandemic affected the program directly or indirectly?
If the program has been running during the pandemic:
How does the program react to the (impact of the) pandemic?

Summary

SWOT-analysis
Successful/unsuccessful elements
Overall evaluation on success

The data collection and evaluation was carried out using various information sources, including desk research (online sources, the website of the practice, documentation, evaluations, policy and academic studies etc.), followed by optional tools, such as interviews with relevant stakeholders (e.g. program manager, leader of the project and/or the organization) and external experts; some could be complemented with field visits.

THE MAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SELECTED PRACTICES

The 14 selected practices are evenly distributed among the five participating countries (3-3 cases from France, Italy, Hungary, and Romania and 2 from Spain). The list of the selected programs and their main characteristics are provided in Table 1.

Table 1 Main characteristics of the selected practices

	France 1	France 2	France 3	Italy 1	Italy 2	Italy 3	Hungary 1	Hungary 2	Hungary 3	Romania 1	Romania 2	Romania 3	Spain 1	Spain 2
name of the action	Maîtrise d'oeuvre urbaine et sociale (MOUS) de Montreuil *(Urban and social project management in Montreuil)*	MOUS de Saint-Maur	Village temporaire d'accueil à Orly *(Temporary village for reception in Orly)*	Il Villaggio Solidale *(Solidarity Village)*	I rom di via Rubattino *(Roma people from Rubattino street)*	I rom di via Novara *(Roma people from via Novara)*	Bagázs	Gyöngyös complex program	Miskolc számozott utcák lakhatási program *(Housing program in Miskolc numbered streets)*	Pata-Cluj - Social interventions for the de-segregation and social inclusion of vulnerable groups of Cluj Metropolis Area	Sepsi-Gal	Extension of the sewerage network in Sangeorgiu de Mures	Socio-educational intervention program and re-housing - for the Roma community of Lleida	Roma housing project by the Municipality of Cornellà and FAGiC.
Implementing actor (type)	A coalition of public and private actors	Municipality of Saint-Maur with local committees and CBOs	A coalition of public and private actors	Civil / church	Church Civil int. association	Civil /Church	civil	municipality and civil/church	civil / church	Municipality /civil	Municipality /civil	Municipality	Roma organisation	Roma organisation
Funding body	The state and the Department, the Region and EU Feder fund.	Val-de-Marne Council	The Municipality, the Department, the Region and EU FEDER fund.	Private and public funds	Donators	Civil/Church (Caritas) Municipality, Private foundations, EU funds	private and corporate donors, EU funds	EU Funds	central budget funding, donations from the NGO	Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2009-2014 - "Poverty Alleviation "(RO25)	Private (charitas) and public (EU fund)	European Union	Lleida City Council	Municipality of Cornellà
date	2010-2015	2003-2010	2011-2014	2005 - ongoing	2008 - ongoing	2009- ongoing	2011- ongoing	2016-2022	2016-2021 (+ 5 years expected)	2014-2017	2018-2023	launching period - until 2025	2010 - ongoing	2013-2015

Although we have financial information on the projects evaluated, they are not comparable as they differ in that they are only costs related to the housing project element or the budget of the entire large project. Comparability is also hampered by the fact that we have seen aggregate amounts for some families, while in other cases we see the total budget supplemented by operating costs. Finally, the comparability of financial data is hampered by the fact that some projects include the total amount incurred in connection with projects, while in other cases, where the implementer was a municipality or a large charity organization, part of the costs were charged to the organisation's operating expenditure. Thus, financial data are not presented here, but a financial analysis of housing initiatives is definitely warranted in the future.

All the projects are implemented at local level, none of them are covering a wider (regional or national level) geographical area. Slightly more than half of the selected practices (8 projects) are ongoing but not new projects, as they have been running for several years, while 6 practices have already been finished. The implementing actors are, however, diverse, but with a dominance of non-public (civilian, church or private) stakeholders: 3 practices are run by only civil organizations, 5 programs are carried out in collaboration with civilian and church organizations, 5 projects are realized in collaboration with public (mainly municipality) and private or civilian actors, and one program only is implemented by a public body (a municipality).

Accordingly, a variety of funding actors support these initiatives: 3 projects are funded by only EU (or Norwegian Funds), 3 initiatives by only local public (municipality) funds, 1 program is using only private donations, while the other half of the selected practices are funded by a mixture of private (also civilian and church) and public (including EU) funds. However, the budgets of these projects are not possible to compare due to several reasons: we could not find reliable and preferably complete budgetary information to 5 practices, while the budgets for rest of the projects are available in very different ways in terms of total or annual budgets (the latter is not available for each project year) or only in fragments (i.e., funds allocated per household).

All of the practices set concrete, measurable goals, with a clearly defined target group and almost all of them targeted the Roma directly (one project targeted them indirectly). Most of the selected programs are comprehensive, 12 of them deal with at least two more policy areas (e.g., employment, education, health care services, anti-discrimination) besides housing. The remaining two practices are working only on the field of housing.

LESSONS LEARNT
FROM THE ROMA HOUSING PRACTICES

The following section summarizes the findings from the 14 Roma housing practices in terms of their scope (number of beneficiaries involved), preparatory work when the project was designed; the methodology of projects; involvement, reactions of the environment; evaluation; partnership; transparency and visibility. We considered the exemplary nature of the projects mainly to be that the result is sustainable, repeatable (the method can be adapted in other places), and the extent they were able to involve the target group in the planning and implementation are measurable.

The summary sections are complemented with quotes from the case studies to provide deeper insight into specific issues.

Scope

The number of people involved as beneficiaries in the projects presented in the case studies varies greatly. Some initiatives reached only a few families, e.g., in a Barcelona project, where eight families have been able to move from two segregated streets to rental housing or the (non-housing focused) program in the small Hungarian village, Bag, which could improve the housing situation only for 47 families (while many more families receive complex integration support). On the contrary, there are larger programs which have already supported 300-400 people, in France, Italy or Romania. In the case of smaller projects, families and people involved received intensive, personalized assistance, while in the case of larger initiatives, additional services (such as child development, labour market integration) could be provided more cost-effectively.

Box 2: The number of participants / beneficiaries involved

MOUS de Montreuil, France: 117 households, 350 people

Saint-Maur, France: 18 families

Orly, France: 17 Roma households, (77 people)

Pata Rât, Romania: approximately 300 Roma families

Sîngeorgiu de Mureş, Romania: approximately 246 people

Sfantu Gheorghe, Romania: 447 people

Milan, Italy: 106 families (374 people), 2005 to 2019

Milan, Italy: 400 people evicted from a neglected area, 2009

Barcelona, Soler and Cortada Street in the town of Cornellà, Spain: 8 households

Barcelona, Lleida: 27 families

Miskolc, Hungary: 900 Roma tenants did not get any housing replacement

Gyöngyös, Hungary: 6-800 tenants of the segregated area

Bag, Hungary: 47 families

Each project focused exclusively on Roma families, but in two Hungarian cases non-Roma families in the same social situation as the Roma living in the settlement could also be included in the program. Despite the explicit Roma target of the practices, the measures of all selected cases might also cover non-Roma (nor local, i.e., non-migrant) beneficiaries, too (as an option, but not necessarily supporting them).

Preparatory work

The preparation of the selected practices also varies considerably. In two cases the projects were preceded by thorough, scientifically sound planning. In one case, a scientific publication was published in France, while in the other case the methodology of the EU fund providing the support made it mandatory. This is the so-called CLLD (Community-Led Local Development) methodology, one of the main components of which is that local development strategies are prepared with the involvement of local action groups, and local resources, problems and actors are carefully assessed. In the case of Romania, this preparation has taken almost two years and the project is now in its start-up (contracting) phase. The action group (organised by a charity organization) was already active in the Roma segregates of Sfantu Gheorghe, so it has been possible to analyze the results so far in this project.

Significant difference has been explored in the preparatory work, which seemingly depends on whether the project takes place in 'native' (i.e., long-term local) or migrant (emigrated to Western European cities from Eastern Europe) communities. While native communities are characterized by a kind of settlement-type development, Western metropolitan areas are more often used by the provision of municipally maintained services - even if this is provided by charities and NGOs under a cooperation agreement with the local (or regional) government. In this case, local entities have more information on the families living in the settlements than organizations working with 'newcomers' without a history or an extensive network in their new home.

Four organizations also mentioned the risk or even experience of a hostile welcome of those moving out of the camp or segregated area into a new neighbourhood and community. Therefore, the organizations had to take steps to mitigate tensions by persuading the locals to reduce prejudices against the Roma or take measures (intensive care for families) which would guarantee that families did not really deserve the prejudices against them. This part of the projects is an important activity that needs to be considered in other locations in the planning phase.

'Following a fire in a squat in the city of Montreuil in July 2008, the mayor immediately decided to offer temporary housing to the Roma without housing but living in Montreuil. They used two empty lots owned by the municipality and bought caravans. French Roma and Gypsy families were, like many local residents, very much opposed to the arrival of these new Romanian Roma neighbours. But the mayor insisted on carrying this through and no eviction was implemented. Local councillors made a political effort to foster solidarity. Fears and prejudices about the integration of people living in the settlement sometimes result in a kind of segmentation between the families to be moved. The program was very selective, involving only a limited number of families, and not the weakest ones, but the more skilled and present in the area for a long time.' (Bouvray Village in Orly, France)

For further analysis, it would be useful to look at how different 'service packages' for families of different statuses are structured and whether there is or can be a transition between each category. It is important to determine the conditions under which a family can fall in each category and what development must take place in order to move to another category, becoming fit, for example, for moving out of segregation.

The latter has arisen as a serious issue, for example, in one Hungarian location, where, although there is a principled intention by the side of the municipality to eliminate a large segregated area (800 people), the program management is unable to offer a model for all families: a simple or standard package of services would not be effective.

'Pathways of social inclusion may take a very long time; this kind of project needs a long-term perspective. (…) Fund raising might be difficult when results are expected only over a very long period.' (Milan-Navara, Italy)

Part of the preparatory phase is to provide resources for each project. Only a few projects have a long-term and secure funding environment, especially at local or regional level, but only in the French and Italian cases. In the case of Eastern European projects, the typical funding source is the support of the municipalities complemented with EU funds in principle, because they cannot allocate significant resources to these projects. This is especially true in Hungary, where the budgetary room for manoeuvre of local governments has been steadily narrowing in recent years.

The complexity of resource planning and project planning is also strengthened by the nature of long-term development. Usually, EU-funded projects are designed for 2-3 years at the most. However, a successful housing project can take 5-8 years until the families involved can be considered successfully integrated and their housing situation can improve.

From the aspect of financial sustainability, the Romanian projects are in the most favourable position, as the CLLD construction will provide a multi-year predictable resource (complemented by Caritas' own resources).

Implementers of EU-funded projects often mention that the rigid administrative rules of the grant scheme are not suitable to cover ever-changing costs that require an immediate response. The latter problem can also be solved if the project is implemented in a civil-church-state consortium, thus using the available EU funds.

Box 3: Who initiated the project

Based on the case studies, the picture is diverse if we look for who the initiator of the given project was. We have not encountered a case where the Roma community itself has acted in demand of change. In one case (Fagic, Barcelona), the initiative came from a Roma organization, but not directly from those living in slums, but from a Roma organization closely associated with them.

In one case, the project was caused by an emergency (a Roma settlement burned down, in Montreuil, France), when the local government and the charity cooperating with it had to act immediately, find new temporary accommodation for the families, and then organize their further housing and social assistance.

In the other cases, either the local government decided to abolish the segregated neighbourhood in the settlement as it represented a social burden that was detained for generations and was unacceptable. In the other case, NGOs acted as initiators (e.g., in Bag, Hungary) because they recognized that the long-term sustainable development of segregated families could only be achieved if the families living in the settlement moved to an integrated living environment.

A special situation in Hungary is the 'Catch-up Settlements Program', launched in 2020 by the government but implemented by Maltese Charity, involving 300 settlements, which implements settlement-type developments in Roma settlements on the basis of a unified methodology. In these cases, either the implementing Maltese Charity 'delivers the program there' or - in rare cases – other NGOs already operating locally will be invited to carry out this program.

Methodology of project

All the Roma housing practices selected from the five metropolitan areas are highly complex programs; none of them are one-dimension housing initiatives.

Housing assistance was assigned development activities tailored to local needs everywhere. The most common developments for each project were:

- Ensuring the education of children;
- Assisting in obtaining identity documents;
- Labour market integration initiatives (vocational training, job-seeking, mentoring);
- Improving access to health care provisions and the health status of the beneficiaries.

The practices selected from Paris, Milan and Barcelona metropolitan areas prove that a prerequisite for successful integration, and thus for retaining the rented housing acquired, is that the families have an independent labour income (or at least a stable and predictable social benefit, but it is a suboptimal solution and does not allow for any significant improvement in the housing situation), because only this can ensure that they are able to cover the cost of rent in the long run. Although the Barcelona organization provided a start-up grant (rent deposit), it placed great emphasis on the job-seeking and workplace mentoring of assisted families.

The complexity of the assistance provided in the cases learned is one of the most important lessons to be mentioned for other housing projects. However, it is also important that these additional services are only possible if they are taken into account when planning the project, the social status of the families is assessed, and the whole project and budget are planned after the individual development plans have been summarized. One of the important lessons of the interviews and focus groups is that individual assessment and development are an indispensable part of these initiatives, even if there are many identities in the situation of those living in segregates.

'Social workers provided by the association Rues et cités were trained by an anthropologist who has promoted a method based on the personalisation of social support and a variety of instruments against any single, rigid, predefined integration pathway. (…) Public services have made great efforts and have acquired a culture of supporting families.' (Montreuil, France)

One of the most important pieces of information in terms of adaptability is the presentation of the innovative solutions used in each project.

Surprisingly, Roma participation in preparation and decision-making was not typical of the projects. There may be a number of reasons for this, but this has not been covered in the case studies; it could be the subject of another project. That is why it can be considered innovative if we find this initiative for inclusion, as in France:

'Two innovations have been implemented to promote active participation of Roma beneficiaries:

- the Social Life Council, which includes 8 family delegates and 4 members of the NGO team;

- a "women's time" workshop that allowed women to reflect on their situation and their own projects.' (Montreuil, France)

Another technical innovation can be linked to France. The housing of those leaving the segregated area was solved with ready-made houses, in the construction of which those living in the segregate also took part. In addition to housing, they were also able to get a job and a salary: 'The project has been appreciated and has served as a source of inspiration for many reasons:

- The originality of self-constructed easily-dismantled housing.

- Its capacity to combine environmental and social goals

- The governance style and logic of the program recognized the dignity and working capacity of the Roma

- It realized a "dismountable village" for emergency temporary housing without entrapping for a long time in a fully segregated ethnically homogeneous shelter for the beneficiaries.

- All involved families found permanent accommodation in social housing

- vocational training and job inclusion has been considered as equally important as children's schooling.

- the mobilisation of young international volunteers in the building process has created original transnational ties.

The construction process was very innovative. No construction materials weighed more than 60 kg (per piece); everything could be carried by one man, and thus there was no need for lifting. This has cut expensive material mobilisation costs. (…) At the end of the project, all the families found temporary accommodation and were then supported to re-house in permanent social housing. All the families involved in the project have a permanent social housing unit. This permanent accommodation is not only within Orly but distributed throughout the Val de Marne department area.' (Orly, France)

However, it has not been possible to involve the participants in the improvement of housing themselves:

'The NGO maintains properties, but there is no dedicated property management, i.e., a maintenance and renovation staff, which would be especially important for such very poor condition properties. (…) The program did not manage to make the residents active partners when there were some minor housing or maintenance problems that could have been manageable even by the residents.' (Miskolc, Hungary)

It is difficult to characterize the Bag (Hungary) case with the usual concept of innovation, in which a local non-governmental organization (in cooperation with volunteers) helps to obtain state support and credit for the purchase of a house for those who move out of the settlement. The novelty here is that Roma families are enabled to obtain state support and a bank loan through very complicated administrative conditions that they are usually not able to get without the help of an NGO, as these subsidies target primarily the middle class. Facilitating mobility also includes legal assistance to clarify the ownership of those living in the houses of the segregated settlement. In addition to the pro bono law firms involved, legal aid is provided by university law students.

It is also difficult to consider financial education as an innovative measure, as it is usually included in the toolkits of a well-functioning social developer. However, not everywhere - in 2015 debt consolidation support was withdrawn from the Hungarian social assistance system. Non-governmental organizations are still dealing with this (e.g., in Bag, Hungary), but one of the Barcelona cases also shows that families need such help, thus this activity should be part of a housing program.

'The families must learn to pay rent and bills as a part of living in a flat, but of course it should be affordable for them, otherwise they will be back at the camp. The financial part must be supervised and must give some support to the families on how to manage the money for the whole month. They receive their amount monthly, so they have to learn to distribute the money to pay the rent, bills and make money last for the whole month.'

Involvement, reactions of the environment

The majority of case studies report that the relocation of people living in the settlement to an integrated living environment often leads to tensions due to the resistance of those already living there. A good example of this is Gyöngyös (Hungary), where the local government (in cooperation with Maltese Charity) runs a multi-annual, high-budget EU program. In the program, the (so-called 'soft elements', that is, the social development part of the project) services for the locals are provided by the Maltese Charity in a community service centre set up on the edge of the site (donation mediation, development sessions for children, helping families with administrative tasks). The infrastructural developments are limited to the asphalting of the streets of the area and the cleaning of the public space.

There will be no renovation of local houses in very poor condition (no renovation of privately owned real estate is allowed using EU funds) or relocation to other areas of the city. The vice-mayor of the city, and representative of the area, makes it clear: *'The people of the city would not accept the people living here elsewhere in the town because they would not be able to integrate. But if that's not enough, imagine that if such a family moves, even if they are decent people, into a property on a tidy street, the value of the property will begin to decline immediately. That's why no one wants to see them next door. And there is no politician in the town who is brave enough to represent such an idea.'* Thus, the city does not even aim to eliminate segregated areas in the long run even though it has a program and dedicated sources to reach this goal. Thus, the developments that take place can only maintain their impact for a short time.

This phenomenon also occurs in other countries and settlements. However, there are locations where the implementing stakeholder tries to find an answer to the resistance of society, because the survival of the settlements also depends on the persistence of the local social issues. It had been realized by the city of Montreuil, France, after a fire in a squat in 2008, when the mayor insisted on maintaining the relocation of Romanian Roma people despite the tensions in the local community. Finally, in 2010, the municipality built a MOUS project for the 117 families (around 350 people), with two temporary housing sites called "integration villages", each of them managed by one NGO.

A MOUS project for the integration of the Roma people brought together the municipality, regional bodies, and the state. They attributed a budget for the inclusion of the selected individuals and brought in an association to oversee the insertion of actions.

There are places where, as a kind of 'intermediate solution', with the first wave of migrants, social workers try to convince the locals that accommodating Roma families does not mean excessive risk. Thus, the target group of the project is not only the Roma

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families moving out, but also the non-Roma residents. *The main goal was the re-housing of the families into standard homes (flats) and supporting their adaptation process in the flats and in the neighbourhoods. The programme found many barriers and difficulties. It started again with the relocation of the families and right now there is a monitoring / mediation service with the families working also with the non-Roma neighbours. (…) After working very closely also with social services, it was decided to start the phase with only 4 families, see their adaptation and then follow with the rest of the families. In 2011, 4 families were re-housed in a flat and they had a "family worker" (a kind of social worker) supporting them.'* (Barcelona)

The head of the NGO Bagázs (Bag, Hungary) also said that raising awareness among the majority of society is at least as much a task for the organization as it is to help the Roma families. 'I told the mayor that as long as the settlement remains segregated and no non-Roma family moves here, one cannot expect the Roma to be welcomed outside the settlement. With such a large socialization gap, it cannot be expected that outgoing Roma families will live up to the new standards. If there are no paved roads, garbage will stand in mountains, stray dogs will not be rounded up, and policemen will rarely pass by – patrol the area, then the situation will not change.

Evaluation (Success)

Planned and systematic evaluations were carried out only in three projects. In two cases, there was a scientific analysis of the intervention. Thorough, impact-based evaluation was mainly carried out by projects that also used EU funds, but less so in the case of non-governmental organizations and Caritas - probably in the absence of dedicated resources. Perhaps an exception is the case of Bagázs (Bag, Hungary), which keeps an up-to-date online database of the activities of the involved children and the opinions of the mentors, which is an internal management tool, and can later serve as a basis of evaluation.

This online database is definitely adaptable and exemplary, because in addition to triggering the data collection process of objective evaluation and providing an overview of progress on a daily basis, it completely replaces the paper-based administration that is frustrating and detrimental to the efficiency of the social workers.

There were two main indicators for the organizations implementing the selected projects, which can be monitored without special apparatus: Number of families moved out or relocated (or those whose housing situation has significantly and measurably improved) and, within that, families whose situation after the intervention also remained permanently better.

For none of the projects did we find a systematic impact assessment based on pre-developed standards, but we did find concrete results, although not usually in a form of proper, quantitative monitoring indicators:

'The MOUS ended in August 2015, when the two sites were closed. (…) This was a pioneering operation in France, and the largest of its kind. Almost all the families had found a place in a temporary housing service or in social housing. It was a "success", at least in numerical terms, because the housing integration was not durable for all of them, with some households squatting in an abandoned building again, and involved in a new municipal program. (…) The programme has helped innovate the city governance style, it has satisfied fundamental needs for housing and job inclusion, and it has politically and socially empowered the Roma involved. (…) The programme was less expensive than any other ones based on paid nights in social hotels, or on homeless shelters, or emergency shelters.' (Saint-Maur, France)

In Italy, it is now possible to look back over 10 years of the practices, so there is an opportunity for an established evaluation to assess or predict the success of the integration process in the case of each family involved. *After ten years, the majority of those families, although in situations that are different from one another, have a regular residence in regular housing units, with at least one adult working and children attending secondary school. In terms of numbers, via Rubattino's is one of the most significant examples of a successful transition from shacks to*

housing units over the last few years. (Milan, Italy)

Despite the fact that the impact assessment was not carried out by external and independent evaluators in the selected practices, some projects provided objective and self-reflective reporting based on an internal evaluation, which showed that housing project implementers need to be prepared for (partial) failures and be flexible enough to fine tune or even impose more significant amendments in project implementation if necessary: *'After one year, the situation was terrible. The families had big debts on the rental payments, (…) It was very hard for the families to take over all the payments. So after 2 or 3 years, they were back at the camp. (…) In 2017, some families were already rehoused and the process ended in 2018. Currently, all the original families are living in flats.'* (Barcelona)

'The number of families transferred to new housing units could be a measurable impact and it suggests that the program is less effective, as 11 families have been replaced to alternative housing within 5 years instead of the originally planned 60 housing units.' (Miskolc, Hungary)

Because the R-Home project started after some of the analysed projects, it was not possible to compare the effectiveness of the projects with the same methodology. Nevertheless, it would be useful to analyse not only these but also other housing initiatives through a systematic evaluation using external and uniform indicators.

Partnership

All but one project were implemented in a consortium framework. The efficiency of mixed consortia and collaborations is clear. Without the municipal actor, none of the projects could gain the support of the local population, which is the legitimacy of the project. The local government can also provide the infrastructural condition for relocation. Thus, it can be an important help either in the designation of rental flats or properties to be built, or in liaising with local authorities.

'It shows the importance of having a dedicated civil servant working within the municipal administration in order to promote the work of NGOs and associations and religious policy implementation and service delivery. (…) It has developed a governance style based on reaching out mechanisms, where civil servants and human rights activists met and worked hand in hand with Roma beneficiaries. A style based on listening, hearings, meetings outside working hours, with an interest for conviviality. (…) It has proven the effectiveness of a method based on a variety of housing instruments and flexibility, finding solutions for families on a case-by-case basis. (…) This programme gave the families enough autonomy to go their own way without locking them into a rigid integration scheme. The autonomy of these families was not seen as an obstacle, although it constitutes a real resource in the integration process.' (Montreuil, France)

Civic and charity organizations can undertake fieldwork and social development, especially in countries (Eastern Europe) where the state-municipal social welfare system does not have sufficient (human) capacity to implement a project of this scale. Another important role can be played by non-governmental or charity organizations in providing a trusting part of the relationship, as in many cases the families involved do not trust official, municipal actors.

An additional advantage of involving charities is that they have their own and more or less predictable budget, which, especially with some EU funding, can provide important room for manoeuvre in securing costs that are either ineligible under EU procedures or not included in the budget or were not expected many years earlier in the preparatory phase.

In five cases, we met a stakeholder or partner who provided significant assistance in the preparation of the project by knowing and, if necessary, accurately assessing the social and cultural status of the families to be involved, and having the outlook and knowledge of what measures are adequate in case of a problem. In other words, it is definitely worth involving such external actors in the planning.

Transparency, visibility

About half of the projects in the case studies have an internet site that provides detailed information about the projects and implementers. More printed materials are available for previously completed projects, but implementers are also ready to provide further information.

All partners involved in the R-HOME project are open to the adaptation of the applied solutions, and it is possible to contact the organizations on these interfaces.

To facilitate this, we provide here the contact details of the organizations involved in the project:

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CONCLUSION

All of the studied practices were implemented in a consortium and using a complex approach, i.e., all of the initiatives expanded their development and integration goals and have not been limited to providing or improving housing only. It is rooted in the design of this research, as a complex approach is perceived as a crucial factor in every successful initiative in this field.

A successful housing project has at least two criteria, based on the lessons learnt from the 14 cases selected for mutual learning. One is that several (municipal, civic, charity, academic) entities form a community of developers, a consortium, thus providing the synergy needed to solve a rather complex social problem. The other is that development projects should be implemented with thorough service planning after getting to know the families and persons to be assisted, thus it is not possible to take over projects per se already implemented elsewhere without any adaptation, but rather to compile the most efficient activities, that is methods from the projects successfully used. A good example of this is the French model, where active adults were involved in assembling lightweight houses, giving them both work and income, or the Bagázs (Bag, Hungary) example, where public housing support otherwise available to less vulnerable, rather middle-class citizens was made available to Roma families through legal assistance.

If families live solely on social benefits, that is, if they are unable to eliminate their dependence on the social care system and earn an income, it cannot be hoped that the housing situation will continue to improve. Specifically, even if a family is able to move into a rental apartment, tenant status can only be maintained there through intensive social work and employment. The latter is a guarantee of the payment of rent, while the former is a means of shaping the attitude of the majority community. Realization of this stimulated more project designers and implementers to link an employment component to a housing project for a sustainable result.

Ignoring the resentment of a hostile, non-Roma environment might have a negative impact on the housing initiative. There are several ways to improve this attitude (step-by-step relocation, intensive family care, and keeping in touch with neighbours), but this step cannot be missed in the designing phase of a project to ensure a sustainable outcome.

Experience shows that it is necessary to diversify not only the composition of the implementing consortium, but also the source of the project. From an EU fund

alone, due to its rigidity, it is very difficult to successfully implement these projects, which often face ever-changing financial needs. The status of families is constantly changing, to which we must respond by using costs flexibly. This is possible if you have a partner with a more flexible budget who can cover these often ad hoc costs.

In the case of housing programs, the dilemma is whether the existing living environment should be improved, thus leaving the autonomy of the residents to coexist, or whether residents should be strengthened to leave the segregated environment and take steps to integrate into the majority society. It is not possible to get a clear answer from the examples, but the fact that quality housing is conditional on labour market integration, while labour market integration is not very possible without qualitative (and thus integrated) change in housing, shows that sustainable and significant change is expected if these families are given the opportunity and help to leave the segregated settlements permanently.

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