



Mutual learning on Roma housing and participation through practices (WP3)

Final conference „Access to Housing and Rights for Roma, Sinti and Caminanti People”

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Project R-HOME

Roma: Housing, Opportunities, Mobilisation and Empowerment



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Aim and methods

Aim

- Elaboration of mutual learning outcomes, suggestions and recommendations based on Roma housing practices
- by collecting Roma housing (best/good) practices in 5 metropolitan areas in 5 EU countries (3-3 projects in France, Hungary, Italy, Romania and 2 projects in Spain)

Methodology

- Ensuring *comparability* across countries, regions and practices
- *Not only best/good, but any relevant / remarkable practices* (both satisfactory and unsatisfactory elements might be important) - this research design allows us to include 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).
- *Comprehensive programs* are preferred: not only housing, but more areas are covered by the program (housing + employment / education / health / access to public services / empowerment / anti-discrimination) which are important to include for a successful integration project.
- *Data collection*: desk research, incl. evaluations (if any), interviews with various stakeholders, field visits

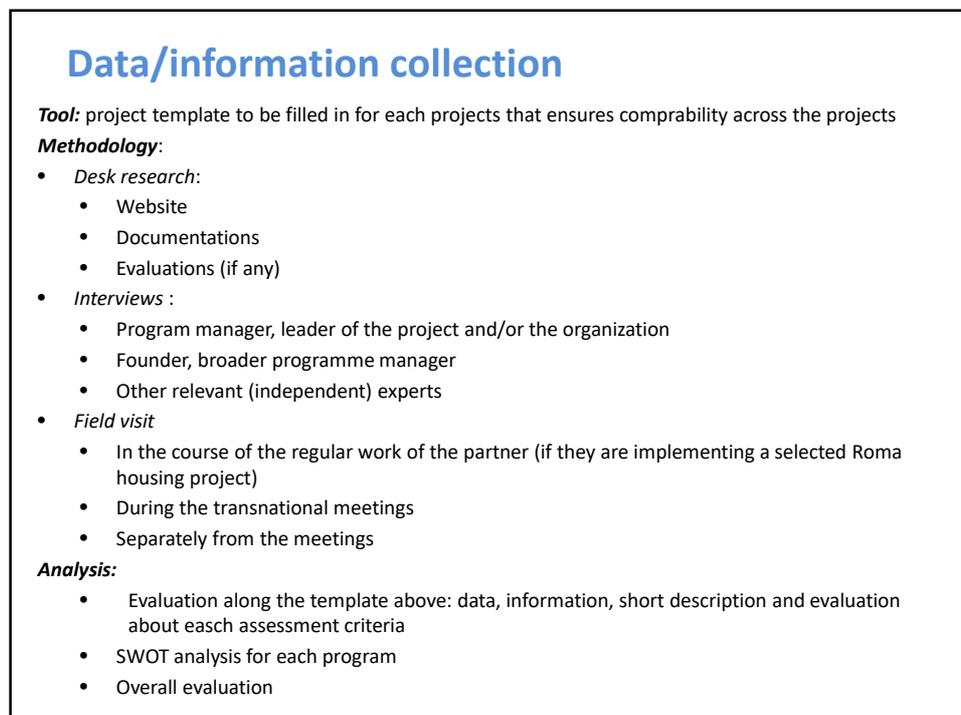
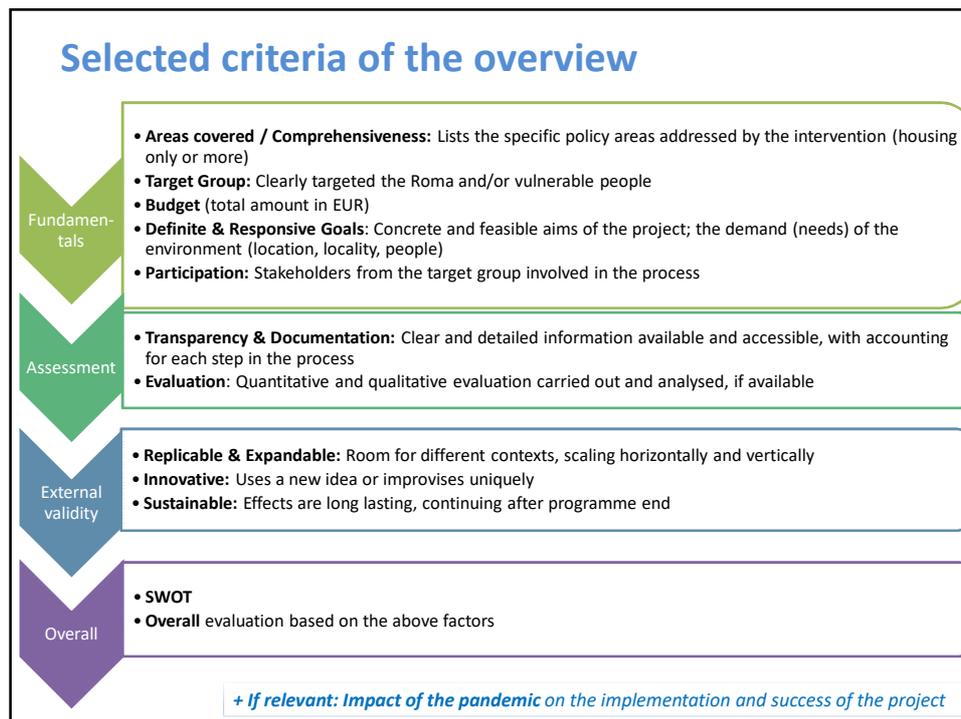
Main criteria to select Roma housing projects

14 Roma housing practices from the wider metropolitan areas of Paris, Milan, Miskolc, Targu Mures and Barcelona has been selected and overviewed in 2020, along the following main criteria:

- **Location:** The selected project should be implemented in the region of the participating partners, and the partners should have insight and information about the evaluated projects;
- **Success and transferability:** The initiative should be at least partially successful; it would be possible to identify good practice in at least some of their activities and methods, which could be adapted in other places;
- **Complexity:** the project should not only deal with the infrastructural aspect of housing but other relevant fields of social inclusion
- **Time frame:** projects should be selected from the past 20 years (the earliest project launched began in 2003), both finished and still running (but with some already completed elements) projects were selected

Selected projects by metropolitan areas

France / Paris	Hungary / Miskolc	Italy / Milan	Romania / Targu Mures	Spain / Barcelona
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bagázs (Bag) • Gyöngyös complex program • Miskolc számozott utcák lakhatási program (Housing program in Miskolc numbered streets) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Socio-educational intervention program and re-housing -for the Roma community of Lleida • Roma housing project by the Municipality of Cornellà and FAGiC.



Main characteristics of the practices

- **Location:** All the projects are implemented at local level, none of them are covering a wider (regional or national level) geographical area.
- **Time frame:** 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 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 1 program only is implemented by a public body (a municipality).
- Accordingly, a variety of **funding actors** support these initiatives:
 - Half of the projects (7) are funded by a mixture of private (incl. civilian and church) and public (incl. EU) funds
 - The other half of the projects (7) are funded by one type of funder: 3 projects are funded by only EU (or Norwegian Funds), 3 initiatives by only local public (municipality) funds, and 1 program is using only private donations.
- **Goals:** 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).
- **Complexity:** 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;
 - 2 practices are working only on the field of housing

Scope of the practices

Number of beneficiaries:

- *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 8 families or the (non-housing focused) program in the small Hungarian village, Bag could improve the housing situation only for 47 families (while many more families receive complex integration support).
 - The larger programs have already supported 300-400 people (France, Italy or Romania)
- *Size has consequences on the quality and cost-benefit aspects of service provision:* 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.

Targeting the Roma

- *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).
- However, *surprisingly, Roma participation in preparation and decision-making was not typical in these 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.

Preparatory work

Project planning:

- The preparation of the selected practices varies considerably.
- In two cases the projects were preceded by thorough, scientifically sound planning.
 - In one case it was a condition set by the funder (EU): CLLD (Community-Led Local Development) methodology, in which local development strategies are prepared with the involvement of local action groups, and local resources, problems and actors are carefully assessed.

Assessment of the social context

- 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: it has been mentioned by only 4 projects, but it is a more general barrier to the success of these projects
 - 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 the smoother integration of the formerly segregated families into the new community.

Involvement of the Roma

- Roma beneficiaries should be also prepared for the transition
- Roma stakeholders were barely involved into the preparation of the selected projects

Diverse situation of NGOs across the EU

- Successful applications to (EU, national or local) funds should be based on predictable and fair evaluation system and should not be politically biased

Financial planning

- Part of the preparatory phase is to provide **resources** for each project, which is **predictable and valid in the long run**.
 - Only a few projects have a long-term and secure funding environment, especially at local or regional level (and only in the French and Italian cases in our sample).
 - 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.
- **EU-funded projects are often perceived rigid** in terms of the administrative rules of the grant scheme that are not suitable to cover ever-changing costs that require an immediate response. It can be overcome if the project is implemented in a civil-church-state/municipality consortium and not relying on EU funds only.

Strategies and methodologies of implementation

Complexity of intervention areas

- All the Roma housing practices are highly complex programs; none of them are one-dimension housing initiatives.
- Housing assistance was assigned development activities tailored to local needs everywhere, combined with the followings:
 - 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.

Complexity of assistance

- It should be taken into account when planning the project, along with the social status of the families that is assessed in advance, and the whole project and budget should be planned after the individual development plans have been summarized, as individual assessment and development are indispensable parts of these initiatives, even if there are many identities in the situation of those living in segregates.

Financial independence of the beneficiaries

- A prerequisite for successful integration, and thus for retaining the rented housing acquired, is that the families have an **independent labour income**, because only this can ensure that they are able to cover the cost of rent in the long run (based on Paris, Milan and Barcelona cases)

Innovative elements

Social and technical innovation (Temporary village for reception in Orly)

- 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."*

Semi-innovative elements

- Legal assistance (Bagázs, Hungary)
 - to help to obtain state support and credit for the purchase of a house
 - to clarify the ownership of those living in the houses of the segregated settlement
- Financial education, debt counselling (Bagázs, Hungary and FaGic, Barcelona)

Involvement, reactions of the environment

Neighbourhood tensions

- The relocation of the Roma from segregated to integrated living environment often leads to tensions due to the resistance of those already living there, especially in Eastern Europe
- This atmosphere could easily lead to the conservation of segregated areas unless local politicians are committed and brave enough to search for solutions to break the resistance of the locals

→ it requires political will and methodical skills, how to convince the majority population.

→ Thus the target group of housing integration programs are both the Roma and the non-Roma living in the same settlement.

Evaluation

- Planned and systematic evaluations were scarce; carried out only in 3 projects (but 8 projects are still running) .
 - In 2 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 due to the absence of dedicated resources.
- None of the selected projects carried out 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 (e.g. in Saint-Maur, France).
- 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 (e.g. in Barcelona or in Bag, Hungary)
 - Example: the internal management tool used by 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 can also serve as a basis of evaluation.

Partnership

All but one project were implemented in a consortium framework. The efficiency of mixed consortia and collaborations is clear. The advantages to include these actors are:

Municipality

- A municipal actor is essential to help in gaining 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.

Civic and charity organizations

- NGOs 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.
- NGOs are able to ensure trust in the relationship, as in many cases the families involved do not trust official, municipal actors.
- NGOs and charities 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.

External actors

- In 5 cases, external stakeholders or partners were involved, 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

Transparency, visibility

- About half of the projects in the case studies have a website 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.

Conclusions - Drivers to success

1. All of the practices were implemented in a **consortium**: different types of entities (municipalities, NGOs, church, academic actors) form a community of developers, that provided the synergy needed to solve a rather complex social problem.
2. It also leads to **diversification of funding sources** that includes **non-rigid/flexible funding schemes** (that is often provided by civilian actors) to respond to changing conditions and compensate the rigidity of EU funds
3. All of the practices were using a **comprehensive / complex approach**, i.e. expanded their development and integration goals and have not been limited to providing or improving housing only.
4. Development projects were implemented with a thorough **service planning** after getting know the beneficiaries (families and persons to be assisted) that is later complemented with **intensive social work** during and after the project implementation.
5. However, it also means, that **it is not possible to take over projects per se** already implemented elsewhere without any adaptation, but rather **to compile the most efficient activities or methods** from the projects successfully used.
6. The **duration** of the program should be long enough to reach the housing and integration goals, but also relevant from the aspect of funding.
7. **Involving the non-Roma people and environment** in the neighbourhood where the de-segregation process takes place is crucial for successful and sustainable housing projects: **anti-discrimination policy and measures** (e.g. step-by-step relocation, intensive family care, keeping in touch with the neighbours) are essential in a mixed neighbourhood to ensure cooperation rather than conflicts between various social groups.



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