

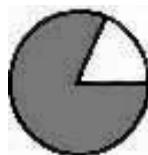
DECADE OF ROMA

INFORMATION BOOKLET OF MINORITY RIGHTS CENTER

*YEARLY REPORT LEAGUE FOR DECADE
2006.*

JANUARY 2007





**Centar za prava manjina
Minority Rights Center**

Gospodar Jovanova 81/13, 11000 Beograd, Srbija
tel: +381 11 2626486, 2623238, 3287104
e-mail: office@mrc.org.yu, web: www.mrc.org.yu



DECADE OF
ROMA

INCLUSION
2005-2015



Swedish Helsinki Committee

for Human Rights



OPEN SOCIETY INSTITUTE
& Soros Foundations Network

DECADE OF ROMA

Information Booklet of Minority Right Center

YEARLY REPORT LEAGUE FOR DECADE 2006.

Cover design and technical editing:
Ljupka Mirković

Print:
Tipo-graf
22. decembra 22, Ruma

Print run:
500

This issue of the newsletter of the Minority Rights Center is dedicated to the yearly report of the League for the Decade of Roma for the year 2006.



**Norwegian People's Aid
Solidarity in Action**

Printing of this booklet was supported by the Norwegian People's Aid

MINORITY RIGHT CENTER

Minority Right Center (MRC) is nongovernmental organization established in 2001 in Belgrade that represents public interests and is engaged in activities aimed at improvement of Roma rights. MRC systematically monitors respect of Roma rights, informs the public and recommends measures for improvement of Roma rights. CPM also provide legal assistance in the cases of discrimination against Roma.

By interviewing witnesses and victims, MRC has researched unlawful treatment by the police, violence by skinheads and other private persons, as well as cases of discrimination of Roma. On the basis of analyses of collected documents and analyses of regulations, MRC recommends measures for improvement of Roma status.

MRC analyzes problems of Roma and realization of their rights to education, employment, health care and housing, and it develops strategies for solving these problems. Accordingly, MRC was involved in creation of action plans for Roma, adopted by government of Serbia on 27 January 2005. According to the adopted action plans, Minority Right Center is authorized organization for monitoring implementation.

Minority Right Center made initiative for organizing working groups that would monitor the implementation of action plans and lobby their realization. On the basis of this initiative, working groups for education, employment and health care of Roma were formed during March 2005.

In 2004 MRC started gathering Roma students from Europe across the web portal **www.romstudents.net**. This activity is aimed at giving support to young Roma that would work on improvement of their community's status. This web portal provides information for Roma students about scholarships, seminars, job positions and other useful information. Over 1500 Roma students from all over Europe are regular users of this web portal.

The MRC Internet website **www.mrc.org.yu** is a medium of publication as well as an online documentation center related to Roma. Most MRC publications appear on the website. In addition, the MRC website features information about the "League for the Decade" (<http://MRC.org.yu/leaguefordecade/>) as well as the Decade of Roma Inclusion. Information is organized by the framework established by the Roma Decade 2005–2015 (education, employment, healthcare, and housing). General news about Roma is updated weekly, and healthcare information is updated every second week. In recent years, the MRC website has grown in importance as more and more Roma activities take place online.

Main donors of MRC are: Norwegian People's Aid, Open Society Institute, Swedish Helsinki Committee for Human Rights and Roma Education Found.

Executive Director – *Petar Antić*

Lawyers – *Tanja Drobnyak i Saša Mutić*

Monitoring coordinator – *Lutvija Antić*

Finance Manager – *Jelena Maksimović*

Researches – *Marija Manić, Nada Đuričković, Toni Bislimi, Tanja Jovanović, Piroška Kovač, Tanja Marinković, Boža Nikolić, Tanja Arizanović i Ismet Jašarević*

Health Care Monitor – *Maja Saitović*

Office Manager – *Ljiljana Ilić*

Consultant and Analyst – *Angelina Skarep*

Web administrator – *Ivan Lazarević*

Translators – *Višnja Minčev i Lucy Moore*





YEARLY REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF NATIONAL ACTION PLANS WITHIN THE DECADE OF ROMA INCLUSION FOR 2006

Contents

Introduction.	3
1. Analysis of the national action plans within the Decade of Roma Inclusion.	5
2. Implementation of action plans at national, regional and local levels. . .	6
2.1. Education.	6
2.1.1. Current problems	6
2.1.2. Activities of state institutions	8
2.2. Employment.	11
2.2.1. Current problems	11
2.2.2. Activities of state institutions	12
2.3. Housing.	13
2.3.1. Current problems	13
2.3.2. Activities of state institutions	14
2.4. Healthcare.	16
2.4.1. Current problems	16
2.4.2. Activities of state institutions	17
2.5. Implementation of Action plans on a local level.	18
2.6. Other areas.	20
2.6.1. Right to Legal Subjectivity	20
2.6.2. Discrimination	21
2.7. State policy of improving position of Roma.	22
3. EU initiatives and connection to the Decade of Roma Inclusion.	22
4. Recommendations.	23
ANNEX I – Implementation of local projects by non-governmental organizations in certain areas of the Decade.	28
ANNEX II – Conclusions of the conference “Consolidation and legalization of Roma settlements and housing”.	36
ANNEX III – Statistical records about number of Roma in Serbia.	37

In the context of monitoring implementation of the Action plans for the Decade of Roma, adopted by the Government of Serbia, the League for the Decade submits this 2006 report, which also contains recommendations for next year.

Activities and aims of the League for the Decade

The League for the Decade of Roma is a coalition of non-government organizations, whose aim is to contribute to the realization and efficient implementation of the Action plans of the Serbian Government for the Decade of Roma Inclusion (2005–2015), in the areas of education, employment, healthcare and housing. Founders of the League for the Decade include The Open Society Institute, The Minority Rights Center, the Roma Children's Center, Civil Initiatives, The Yugoslav Association for Roma Culture and Education, Roma Student's Union, Society for Improvement of Local Roma Communities, Yurom Center and The National Council of Roma National Minority. The League for the Decade was formed in October 2005. As the initiator of the League for the Decade, the Open Society Institute appointed Osman Balić to be the League's first coordinator.

There are four boards within the league for the Decade – education, employment, healthcare and housing. These boards assemble representatives of non-governmental organizations that are engaged in those areas. The boards of the League for the Decade provide counseling support to state institutions and monitor the realization of the stipulated action plans for inclusion of Roma.

1. Process of adopting Action plans for Decade of Roma Inclusion

In December 2002 the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights and experts engaged by international organizations created the Strategy for Integration and Empowerment of the Roma Position. This Strategy has never been adopted, as it was planned for the federal level but was never recognized by Montenegro. Nevertheless, in April 2003 the Secretariat for implementation of the Strategy for Integration and Empowerment was formed within this ministry. This Secretariat (in further text – Secretariat for Roma) was formed with support of OSCE.

During 2004 and at the beginning of 2005 the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights, supported by the Open Society Institute, coordinated the process of creating action plans in the priority areas of the Decade of Roma (education, employment, housing and healthcare), as well as in other areas of the Strategy – social care, culture, media and information, measures against discrimination, specifically the position of internally displaced persons, returnees and women. The draft of the Strategy for Integration and Empowerment of the Roma Position was a basis for creating action plans. Action plans were created by working groups, which consisted of individuals appointed by relevant ministries of the Republic of Serbia, the National Council of Roma National Minority, the Government of Serbia, the Delegation of Young Roma Leaders, international and inter-governmental institutions and agencies (UNICEF, Swiss Development Agency, World Bank, OSCE, The Open Society Institute, UNHCR, UNHCHR, IOM), as well as experts from various institutions (the Construction Institute Belgrade and centers for social work).

Action plans for education, employment, housing and healthcare were adopted by the Government of Serbia at the session held on 27 January 2005. However, the budget for implementation of these action plans was not adopted at this occasion.

Aims determined in the four adopted action plans – for education, employment, housing and healthcare – are clearly established, but without precisely determined funds for their implementation.

Indicators of the action plans demand specific research and information that cannot be obtained in the existing system, as there are no records about nationality. Monitoring realization is additionally made more difficult by the fact that stakeholders in three action plans – for healthcare, employment and housing – have not been determined.

Republic institutions do not show enough political will to transfer existing processes into practice. There has been no significant advancement in the realization of aims that were established within



DECADE OF
ROMA
INCLUSION
2005–2015

Open Society
Institute

The Minority
Rights Center

The Roma
Children's Center

Civil Initiatives

The Yugoslav
Association for
Roma Culture and
Education

Roma Student's
Union

Society for
Improvement
of Local Roma
Communities

Yurom center

The National
Council of Roma
National Minority



action plans in all areas of the Decade of Roma Inclusion. The fact that the aims are not achieved is justified by a lack of money. However, the most important factor is a lack of state institutions' capacities.

2. Implementation of Action plans at national, regional and local levels

In the beginning, the assistant to the federal minister of human and minority rights Jelena Marković was appointed the National Coordinator for the Decade of Roma. However, as the two republics separated, the Federal Ministry of Human and Minority Rights ceased to exist in June 2006. The Government of Serbia transferred part of its jurisdiction to the recently formed Office for Human and Minority Rights, whose director is Petar Lađević. Nevertheless, the Secretariat for Roma does not have public authorization and the position exists within an OSCE project, funded by the European Agency for Reconstruction and Development. The Secretariat engaged four persons, three of them being of Roma nationality, including the Secretariat Chief Ljuran Koka. The new Coordinator for the Decade of Roma has not been appointed yet.

Funds for implementation of action plans were not directly stipulated in the Law on the Budget of the Republic of Serbia for the year 2006. Funds should be allotted by ministries within the approved budget. There is no document that obliges state institutions to stipulate funds for implementation of the action plans. Projects that are realized at the national level do not represent systematic changes, but are only at project level and are limited in time.

2.1. Education

2.1.1. Current problems

There is a lack of records about Roma in the educational system of Serbia. Schools do not keep records about children's nationality. A large number of Roma are outside the educational system due to inability to fulfill conditions for enrolment. Research made by Argument and the Minority Rights Center in Belgrade showed that the main reasons for which parents do not enrol children in schools are a lack of money (49,8%) and a lack of documents (20,2%).¹ Documents needed for enrolment in primary school include a birth certificate, registration of residence and a medical certificate (must be paid). Children also have to pass an entry test.

Records on the educational structure of Roma show that about 62% of them have not completed primary school, only 9.6 % have completed anything above primary education, while 50%–85%² of Roma children attend special schools.

According to existing records, 50%–80%³ of Roma children attend schools for children with special needs. Most of them are enrolled in these schools due to their insufficient knowledge of Serbian language.

Availability of education is mostly denied to internally displaced persons. According to research conducted by The Minority Rights Center and Argument in Belgrade, about 20% of participants did not enrol their children in schools due to lack of personal documents. In compliance with the law, local government should provide records of the number of children that are to be enrolled in schools. However, local governments do not have records about number of internally displaced children. Another important problem, which is also defined as an aim of the United action plan for the education of Roma, is the preservation of ethnic identity and development of multi-culturalism.⁴

The percentage of children belonging to the RAE group (Roma, Ashkalies, Egyptians) that drop out of school between the first and the fourth grades is about 12%. Serbia has the highest rate of Roma

1 Report "Roma and the Right to Legal Subjectivity", The Minority Rights Center, Belgrade, April 2006

2 Mihajlovic, M (2004), Study of estimating needs for Roma Educational Fund, World Bank

3 Published in newsletter of The Minority Rights Center "Decade of Roma" No.5 in August 2006

4 Statement of Jadranka Stojanović at the round table "Enrolment of Roma children in pre-school education and in the first grade of primary school" in Belgrade on 9 June 2006

that do not complete primary school – 12.5%, which is also reflected through the fact that many Roma girls drop out of school after they complete the fourth grade.⁵

There is also the large problem of discrimination in education for Roma children, which is a very important obstacle in this area. Existence of direct and systematic discrimination, as well as exclusion from the system of education are described in the report by the European Monitoring Center on Racism. (EUMC).⁶

The study “Roma and Education”⁷ shows that 7 % of Roma pre-school children attend pre-school institutions. This percentage is significantly low in comparison with other population (27%).⁸ During enrolment in pre-school institutions, the regulations of enrolment, reached by the institution’s statute and adopted by the municipality, give priority to children of employed parents. This directly discriminates the Roma population, whose members are mostly unemployed.

Although primary education is free according to the Law on Education, working materials that children use are paid by parents, and Roma families are very poor.

Parents that do not enroll their children in school are mostly from displaced families – 74.5 %, and 25.4 % of them are from domicile families.⁹

There is a group of Roma children, returnees from western-European countries, who return to Serbia according to the signed agreement on readmission. The accurate number of returnees is unknown. UNHCR records from the last five years show that this number is approximately 100,000 people. The Council of Europe has also given similar estimation about the number of people that returned in compliance with the agreement on readmission. According to IOM questionnaires, the assistance program for returnees by the Government of Germany, 63.37% of the total number of voluntary returnees (11,131 persons, from 2000 to 2004) are Roma, 19% are Muslims/Bosnians and 11% declared Serbs. The biggest problem lies in the fact that a large number of Roma returnees neither have any documents, nor have the relatives in legal settlements. This points to the fact that they mostly return to houses of their relatives, who also do not have registration of residence. There are about ten unhygienic settlements in Belgrade alone, in which more than 15,000 live. The problem of Roma is specific, as their children attended school in countries in which they used to live, and most of them did not speak Serbian language.

Most Roma first return to Kosovo and then they move to central Serbia. Thus they moved twice, without any documents that they could use to realize fundamental human rights. Children of these people, even if they are included in school programs, cannot get certificates without the identity documents of their parents.¹⁰

According to the records of non-governmental organizations, there were several cases of segregated classes in primary education during school year 2005/2006. However, it is suspected that there is more segregation than what the records show, as it has yet to be sufficiently researched.¹¹ Cases of segregated classes for Roma were registered in following primary schools: “10. oktobar” in Horgoš, “Stevan Sremac” in Senta and “Branko Radičević” in Bujanovac. Additionally, there was also a case of spontaneous segregation in the primary school “Vuk Karadžić” in Niš. In this school parents from majority population transfer children to other schools, regardless the fact that the mentioned school may have been closer to their place of residence. Children of Roma nationality are 85%–90% of the total number of children in this school. According to the research of the Minority Rights Center, one of the reasons for higher presence of Roma children in this school is lack of acceptance of these children by other nearby schools. This problem of spatial segregation can be spread to other schools in Serbia that are in the vicinity of Roma settlements, as the Law on Education allows enrolment of children in schools outside their area of residence.

5 RCC and Argument conducted a research on representative sample of 5 000 adult Roma and members of their families (data are valid for approximately 25 000 Roma) in five cities in Serbia; research results and numerous information about Roma’s education, their attitudes toward education issues, etc. were collected and published in the book “Roma and education – among needs, wishes and opportunities” in 2003

6 Complete text of the report is available at www.eumc.eu.int

7 Rakočević, N., Miljević, A (2003). Roma and Education, Roma Children’s Center, Belgrade

8 Ibid

9 Report “Roma and Right to Legal Subjectivity”, The Minority Rights Center, Belgrade, April 2006

10 Published on 21 December 2006 in magazine NIN, in the text “Setting a Bomb” pages 20-22

11 The Minority Rights Center, Roma Education Center Subotica.





2.1.2. Activities of state institutions

The national policy of the Ministry of Education and Sports of the Republic of Serbia contained many activities directed towards the education of Roma. The Strategy for Improving the Education of Roma in Serbia was created, as well as the United action plan that was based on the Strategy and on the aims defined within the Decade of Roma Inclusion. The Strategy has not been adopted, but it served for more concrete recognition of strategic directions and action in local environments, starting with defined national frames and through analysis of specific problems in these environments. The first of these documents were developed in Niš and Kragujevac¹², then in Valjevo¹³ and Subotica¹⁴. In all these places strategic documents were created through the partnership of local governments, school administrations and Roma civil sectors, being afterwards adopted by assemblies of these towns.

The analysis of policy referring to the education of Roma is used to define aims and measures directly from recognized problems. They are based on existing programs and projects that began during the process of education reform (2001/2003), but they also stipulate the development of special programs, based on particularities of problems that appear in socially deprived environments. Adapting the system to educational needs of the Roma community and integrating the contents of inclusive education at the faculties where future teachers are educated, should give irreversible character to the processes of Roma education.

It was also decided that education of Roma students must be funded from the budget only. According to the records of the National Roma Council, during the last three years (2003–2005) 240 Roma pupils enrolled in high schools and 180 students entered their desired faculty.¹⁵ The education of all Roma students that applied for faculties is funded by the budget of the Republic of Serbia, which can be considered as some form of scholarship. After several years of implementing these measures, a significant advancement is noticeable in defined enrolment criteria as in an increased number of children that are educated in this way. This statement can be confirmed by the fact that by affirmative action during the school year 2005/2006, 88 students were enrolled in high schools, while the number of enrolled students in the school year 2006/2007 was 260.¹⁶ However, there are still no precise mechanisms that provide for the realization of this right so that it happens in practice and so that the National Council deals with this problem from the June application period until the start of the school year in September.

The focus of the Ministry of Education and Sports on projects that are realized mostly on the initiative of the Roma National Council and international organizations and donors¹⁷ shows the lack of vision and overall planning of long-term effects that could introduce permanent systematic change. In this area, part of the responsibility lies in the donors themselves; however, change of their policies could be provoked by a more pro-active attitude, and more initiatives and ideas from the Ministry. Regardless the fact that education of Roma is the second among priorities of the Strategy for Education of the Ministry of Education and Sports (2005–2010), there is no real connection of this area with current programs of general education which the Ministry implements. This leads to the fact that existing resources and records are not used to a sufficient extent. It can be illustrated by the example of applying results of the National Testing, which were analyzed in the study “Equal Access to Quality Education in Serbia”.¹⁸ Concerning the school achievements of Roma children, after three years they are far below the average achievements of non-Roma children. Detailed analysis of these records leads us to the conclusion that 40% of differences lie in lower socio-economic status of families, to which the educational system itself cannot provide adequate response, while 60% lie in the lower quality of education that Roma receive, which is a fact of which the educational system is not aware. If problems of Roma were treated this way,

12 Local educational strategies developed within OSI Roma Education Initiative (REI) Program and project “Equal chances – integration of Roma children and young people in educational system 2004”.

13 Roma program of Civil Initiatives, funded by NOVIB, supported the project of Roma Democracy Center from Valjevo for creation of local education strategy 2005.

14 Roma Culture Club from Subotica within the project “Save the Children” was the stakeholder of creating Action plan for education of Roma in Subotica 2006.

15 Draft report “Equal Access to Quality Education in Serbia”, OSI EUMAP/The Open Society Institute

16 Ljuan Koka, director of Secretariat for Roma Strategy, Round Table, 24 September 2006

17 In cooperation with the Roma National Council, the Ministry of Education and Sports realized the project Enlarging scope of Roma children by pre-school education, and with OSCE, the project Introduction of Roma Assistants in Education

18 Draft report “Equal Access to Quality Education in Serbia”, OSI EUMAP/The Open Society Institute

it could contribute to more adequate choice of priorities.

At the national level and in cooperation with other organizations, the Ministry of Education and Sports launched five projects aimed at improving education for Roma. Additionally, the Ministry of Education and Sports allotted 30 million dinars for the procurement of school materials and aids for 2,500 Roma school children.

Four projects are financially supported by the Roma Education Fund – “Functional Primary Education of Roma”, “Enlarging Access to Pre-school Education for Roma Children”, “Protection of Children of Roma Nationality from Discrimination” and “Participation Research about Roma’s Needs, Problems and Educational Potentials of Roma Community in Vojvodina”.¹⁹

1. “Enlarging Access to Pre-school Education for Roma Children” – realized by the Ministry of Education and Sports in cooperation with the National Roma Council. Stakeholders in the projects include the National Roma Council and the Ministry of Education and Sports of the Republic of Serbia. The project was facilitated by the Project Council. The following organizations were involved in implementation of this project: the Office for Human and Minority Rights, the Secretariat for the Roma National Strategy, the OSCE Mission in Serbia, the Secretariat for Education and Culture of AP Vojvodina, NGOs that have experience in realizing programs for education for Roma children (the Center for Interactive Pedagogy, the Open Society Institute, the Roma Children’s Center, the Center for Evaluation, Assessment and Research, local NGOs), local governments (city and municipal), and 24 educational institutions in 24 municipalities in Serbia. The project is being realized in the following municipalities: Šabac, Smederevo, Niš, Bujanovac, Vranje, Beočin, Ada, Voždovac, Požarevac, Vladimirci, Koceljeva, Prokuplje, Bela Palanka, Zrenjanin, Valjevo, Kraljevo, Žitište, Zemun and Merošina. Twenty-four educational institutions in Serbia took part in the project – 1 primary school and 23 pre-school institutions.

The aim of the project was to enlarge the inclusion of Roma children in pre-school education. It was also very important to engage local Roma coordinators and to establish better cooperation between families and pre-school institutions. The number of beneficiaries was 600 children, ages 5 to 8.

That number, 600 children, for the whole territory of Serbia is very small in comparison to the total number of Roma children that do not attend pre-school.

Starting from the school year 2006/2007, pre-school education became compulsory, as in compliance with the Law on Education Systems. The full implementation of this law’s element is of great value and importance when Roma children are concerned. The attendance of Roma children in pre-school programs for the minimum period of six months would contribute to better preparation for testing and for the beginning of school, language learning and, in turn, decreasing the number of children sent to special schools.

The Ministry and educational institutions performed this task without a complete analysis of their capacities and with insufficient cooperation with the Roma community. According to information gained from the non-governmental sector, this program comprises far less children than the real demand. As in other educational areas, there is neither a system for monitoring the effects of applied measures, nor the consequences that arose from an absolute lack of implementation.

The state did not take control over conditions that would provide for the complete inclusion of Roma children in the pre-school program, which could further disable more children from continuing their education for than before.

Results of the project are positive in regards to the number of children enrolled in primary school. It is necessary to mention that assessment was done in order to estimate whether children are ready for school, which enable fair categorization of children for special schools.

The Center for Evaluation, Assessment and Research has done an external evaluation of this project. It showed that there was a step forward in the knowledge and skills that children obtained. The project lasted from March till August 2006, i.e. one term of the school year 2005/2006. The institutions were informed of the problem of insufficient inclusion of Roma children in pre-school education and their interest for this issue increased. However, it is still not enough to provide quality pre-school education for all children. This was, in a way, a pilot stage of the project. The implementation of this project should continue during the 2006/2007 school year. Cooperation will continue in the area of monitoring

¹⁹ www.romaeducationfund.org





number of children that were enrolled in pre-school education during the school year 2006/2007. It is also expected that the Roma Education Fund will give its response in regards to the further course of this project. This would enable further engagement of Roma assistants in the project.

Separated Roma classes were not formed. There was a rule that each coordinator was to include 24 children and to place them in three educational groups, so that Roma children represent one third of the entire group. Institutions that formed separate classes for Roma children were not accepted. The main criterion was to form ethnically mixed groups of children.²⁰

2. “Functional Primary Education of Roma”– the stakeholder in this project is the Institute for Philosophy and Adult Education in Belgrade. Partners in the implementation of the project include the Ministry of Education and Sports and the National Roma Council. The implementation of the project was performed in the territory of Serbia and it includes adult Roma, ages 15 to 35, who dropped out from school and need certificates on completion of the seventh and eighth grades of primary school. The necessary requirement for entering the program was completion of the sixth grade of primary school. According to the program of the Faculty of Philosophy and Adult Education, they can complete these two grades in nine months. If they attend school regularly, they get certificates for both grades. After that, they start attending vocational programs, which lasts three months. This program was created by the Faculty of Philosophy and Adult Education in association with vocational high schools. The project is currently underway. In primary schools for adult education, attendants completed the seventh and the eighth grades in September. Their diplomas will be certified and recognized by the Ministry of Labor and Employment. The main aim is to make curricula for the seventh and for the eighth grades. The project is realized in schools located in seven districts of Serbia. These districts are Belgrade (3 schools), Niš (school in Niš), the district of Toplica (school in Prokuplje), the district of Jablanica (school in Leskovac), the district of Pčinje (schools in Vranje and Bujanovac) and the district of North Banat (school in Mol). There are 250 beneficiaries of this program at the territory of Serbia.

3. “Participation Research about Roma’s Needs and Problems and the Educational Potentials of the Roma community in Vojvodina” – stakeholders of this project include the Novi Sad Humanitarian Center (NSHC) and the Association of Roma Students from Novi Sad, who implement the project in partnership relations. The project is currently underway and it should be completed in March 2007. Associates in this program included the Province Secretariat for Regulations, the Administration and National Minorities and the Province Secretariat for Education. It is supported by the Roma Education Fund. The aim of the project is to give contribution to the development of regional and local policy and the creation of action plans for the improvement of the educational status of Roma.

Participation research was performed in 10 municipalities in Vojvodina, using focus groups and questionnaires. The task of this research was to identify barriers to education for Roma, taking into account the work of local governments, schools and centers for social work, i.e. to identify the way in which these institutions can decrease or eliminate identified barriers and improve their programs and activities aimed at improving the educational status of Roma.

The result of the project will be the creation of a strategy proposal and action plan for the improvement of the educational status of Roma in Vojvodina, in cooperation with the Province Secretariat for Education and with the Province Secretariat for National Minorities. Proposals of the strategy and action plan will be presented and recommended to the Province Secretariat for Education and Culture. Taking into account research results and results of the project itself, the Province Secretariat for Education and Culture should take concrete measures in order to improve the integration of marginalized groups in the regular system of education. Additionally, the creation of local action plans for the improvement of the education status of Roma will be facilitated in three chosen municipalities.

Another 12 students will be engaged from the Association of Roma Students, who will take part in the research process. The NSHC will organize educational programs about participation research for 12 Roma students. Additionally, one person from the Association of Roma Students will be engaged as facilitator for the development of three local action plans.

²⁰ Interview by The Minority Rights Center with Anna Marija Čuković, chief deputy of the Office for Human and Minority Rights, Belgrade, 11 December 2006.

The NSHC will engage a research coordinator for development in three local action plans, two senior researchers, a project counselor and experts for the process of planning and implementations the participation research and for the process of creating a strategy proposal and action plan.²¹

4. “Protection of Children of Roma Nationality from Discrimination” – the stakeholder of this project is The Minority Rights Center, and it is implemented in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Sports. Certain project activities arise from the United Action Plan for Education of Roma.

The project is supported by the Roma Education Fund and between October 2006 and October 2008, and includes the training of 22 republic and 10 municipal inspectors, aimed at making them able to recognize discrimination and to react adequately. There was also training for 25 representatives of non-governmental organizations for monitoring and reporting on discrimination in the education system. During the project, 10 persons will monitor and report on discrimination and a lawyer will provide legal assistance. Research will be done in Belgrade, Niš, Novi Sad, Leskovac, Vranje, Kragujevac, Valjevo and the district of Western Bačka. The project comprises the creation of instructions for recognition, monitoring and acting in cases of discrimination and the creation of newsletters for children, young people, and parents about human rights and their protection.

5. Introduction of Assistants for Support of Roma Education” – Stakeholder of this pilot project is the Ministry of Education and Sports of the Republic of Serbia.²² The project is financially supported by the European Agency for Reconstruction and Development and it is realized in cooperation with the OSCE Mission in Serbia. The project is a part of the program “Support for Roma”, supported by the European Agency for Reconstruction and Development.

Within this program it is stipulated that 20 assistants will work from the beginning of the second term of the school year 2006/2007, while 54 assistants will undergo training, funded by the European Agency.

However, activities will be postponed and the introduction of assistants is expected in 2007. During 2006 the Ministry of Education and Sports in cooperation with the Center for Interactive Pedagogy organized a seminar for future assistants.

The aim of the project is to improve educational level of Roma pupils in Serbia and their inclusion in the education system, in compliance with the Action plan for the improvement of Roma education.

The assistant to the Minister for International Education Cooperation, Vesna Fila, stated that all chosen candidates needed to meet the following requirements: knowledge of Romany language, appropriate education and experience working with Roma children.²³

2.2. Employment

2.2.1. Current problems

Unemployment rates in the Roma population is significantly higher than in the majority population – up to 2.5 times higher than the average rate in the age group of 35–44 years. The percentage of full-time employed Roma is also lower than in the majority population (20% Roma while 60% general population). Roma are disproportionately more present in jobs in which qualifications are not needed (done by 90% of unemployed Roma), as well in part-time, seasonal jobs. Roma face serious obstacles in obtaining advantages granted by their education, even in the rare cases when they complete high school or university degrees.²⁴

Roma who live in informal settlements cannot register at the National Employment Service in their place of residence. They need registration of residence, which they cannot obtain, as they live in informal, illegal settlements that are not registered. According to the research done by Argument and the

21 Interview by the Minority Rights Center with Dejan Dimitrov, director of the NGO “Union of Roma Students”, Novi Sad, 13 December 2006

22 www.mps.sr.gov.yu

23 Press conference, Government of the Republic of Serbia, Belgrade, 24 October 2006

24 REF document “Country situation and REF working strategy” (draft version), presented in the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights, 20 April 2006





Minority Rights Center, 35.5% Roma in Belgrade are not registered in the labor market.

According to the records of the civil sector, very few Roma have not been exposed to some form of discrimination at least once in his or her life. Records show that Roma most often face discrimination during the process of employment (24.9% of cases) and least often in courts (7.1%).²⁵

The collection of secondary raw materials is one of the most frequent jobs, and though it appears organized given the number of individuals engaged in the work, it is far from regulated. According to the records gained in the study *Paper Life*, there are 9,000 to 16,000 collectors of secondary raw materials in Belgrade alone, most of them coming from the Roma community.²⁶ They earn money, but under very unfavorable conditions. If this activity were legalized, the problem of many Roma would be solved. Thus they could access rights guaranteed state employment. So far, the relevant institutions seem uninterested in seriously addressing this problem.

One reason for the insufficient participation of Roma in almost all employment programs is the lack of information and knowledge. The lack of information about labor markets, rights in the area of labor and employment and about measures for the realization of these rights is a significant obstacle to members of the Roma community in the achievement of possible benefits that the system provides. However, the National Employment Service cannot register unemployed Roma and therefore cannot work with them directly, as nationality is not stated in records. According to the words of the assistant to the Minister, this problem should be solved by a new law on the registration of unemployed individuals. This law is in the preparation stage and it should contain this provision about nationality.²⁷

2.2.2. Activities of state institutions

The Ministry of Labor, Employment and Social Policy allotted 120 million dinars for the active improvement of employing unemployed citizens, including Roma. During the implementation of supplementation measures for self-employment of unemployed persons, Roma were affirmatively treated as they were granted additional points in the process of applying. Given the fact that the National Employment Service does not keep records about the nationality of registered citizens, there is no data about how many Roma use the measure of self-employment. In addition to this measure, the Ministry of Labor, Employment and Social Policy made a public invitation for the organization of public works that are of interest to the Republic during 2006, and one of the priority areas within the maintenance and reconstruction of public infrastructure is reconstruction of Roma settlements. The public invitation was made in August 2006. However, it was not published transparently enough, resulting in a very low response. The notice was forwarded only by electronic mail to Roma non-governmental organizations. This Ministry also formed a working group for monitoring the implementation of the action plan, in which two Roma were included.

The issue of employment is integrated into general policy and action plans for employment to the highest extent possible. There are special sections devoted to the employment of Roma in the National Employment Strategy (2005–2010), the National Action Plan for Employment (2006–2008), the Schedule for using funds and transfers to organizations of obligatory social insurance intended for the program of active support of employment, as well as in the Work Plan of the National Employment Service.

The action plan for the employment of Roma was created in high correlation with general employment policies and it contains the following aims: analysis of the socio-economic status of the Roma population, the improvement of business within the Roma population, preparations of Roma for transitional and post-transitional period and market demands, inclusion in the public works program, the empowerment of Roma and increased motivation for active job searching, employment in state institutions, the empowerment of working identity in the Roma population and the increase of availability of information in the area of employment.

One of the basic measures in the action plan for employment of Roma is self-employment. The announcement was made and translated into the Romany language, and granted Roma top priority.

25 Jakšić, B, Bašić, G. (2005), *The Art of Survival – Where and How Roma in Serbia Live*, Library Disput, Institute for Philosophy and Social Theory

26 M.Simpson-Herbert, A.Mitrović, G.Zajić, M.Petrović, *Paper Life, Revelation/DURN*, 2006.

27 Ibid.

Being a member of Roma national minority meant additional points at the list of priorities for this announcement. According to the records of the National Employment Service, there were 7,864 applications before 18 December 2006, 224 of them from people of Roma nationality.²⁸

Relevant institutions are interested in cooperating with Roma non-governmental organizations. However, it seems they still have not developed methodology for developing partnership which could become a constructive instrument of showing good will in practice.

So far there have been only around 20 agreements with Roma for self-employment. About 25 decisions were reached, but not all of the participants agreed to sign.²⁹ During the implementation of this program there was a problem the nationality of individuals. The National Employment Service does not keep records about nationality of persons that use their programs, so it was impossible to find the number of unemployed Roma.

On 24 August 2006 the Government of Serbia adopted the "Decision on making public invitation for organizing public works that are of interest to the Republic". On this occasion, funds for the year 2006 in the amount of 100,000,000 dinars were provided from the budget of the Republic of Serbia. The basic aims included socio-economic development and raising the quality of life. The "Public Works" announcement was valid from August till September. NGOs from Belgrade did not apply, nor were any projects submitted by Roma. Within this project, priority was given to people with no education. Funds for "Public Works" have been planned in the 2007 budget.³⁰

Within the announcement for public works, the National Employment Service undertook the project "A More Beautiful Serbia". The project stipulated the participation of 30% Roma. However, the response of Roma was insufficient, due to inadequate information.³¹

The Ministry of Labor, Employment and Social policy will submit a report on the realization of "Public Works", which are of interest for the Republic of Serbia. The report will be submitted to the Government of Serbia by 1 February 2007.

There were no programs at the level of the Ministry of Labor, Employment and Social Policy that enabled employment of Roma with higher education.³²

The Law on Employment and Insurance in the Case of Unemployment, which was adopted in 2003, stipulates special affirmative measures for cases of unemployment that would encourage employment of certain categories of individuals, including members of ethnic minorities, where the unemployment rate is more prominent.³³ Minorities to which this refers are not stated in the text of law. In order to apply this measure in practice, the government should adopt a program that stipulates the actualization of the measure, after the ministry's suggestion that the measure is relevant for labor and employment issues and after obtaining the opinion of the Social-economic Council of Serbia.³⁴

2.3. Housing

2.3.1. Current problems

According to the data collected in the study *Where and How Roma in Serbia Live*³⁵, there are 593 Roma settlements in Serbia, 72% of which are not legalized or are only partly legalized, and 43.5% of the settlements are categorized as slums. Out of the total 593 settlements, 285 are located in towns,

28 Interview by The Minority Rights Center with Zorica Babić, National Employment Service, Belgrade, 18 December 2006

29 Stated at the meeting of the employment board by the representative of the Ministry of Labor and Employment Eduard Čalikijan, held on 15 December 2006

30 Ibid.

31 Stated at the meeting of the Board for Employment of Roma, held on 15 December 2006; stated by representative of the Belgrade Branch for Employment Eduard Čalikijan

32 Interview by The Minority Rights Center with Srđan Anrijević from the National Employment Service, Belgrade, December 2006

33 Law on Employment and Insurance in Case of Unemployment, Article 31, paragraph 4

34 Law on Employment and Insurance in Case of Unemployment, Article 31, paragraph 1: "Government should adopt the program of active employment policy for the Republic, after the suggestion of the ministry that it is relevant for labor and employment issues and after obtained opinion of the Social-economic Council of Serbia".

35 Jakšić, B, Bašić, G. (2005), *The Art of Survival – Where and How Roma in Serbia Live*, Library Disput, Institute for Philosophy and Social Theory





while the rest of them are rural or are located in town outskirts. The highest density Roma population is in Belgrade, then in the northern-western part of central Serbia, in Vojvodina and in some parts of South Serbia. Settlement infrastructure is very bad (more than 50% settlements do not have asphalted roads and water supply system, more than 60% do not have sewage system, and 35% are without electricity), and access to institutions is poor (schools are more than 1 km from 50% houses, medical institution for 60% and stores for almost 80% of the houses in these settlements).

Between 1991 and 2001 general economic crisis and war conflicts in this country impacted Roma migration. Displaced Roma from Kosovo and from rural environments and undeveloped municipalities in the southern part of Serbia moved to more developed towns and where they began to create slums. Additionally more than 10,000 Roma have returned to Serbia so far in accordance with the Agreement on Readmission.³⁶

2.3.2. Activities of state institutions

During 2006 the Ministry of Capital Investments did not stipulate funds for the implementation of the action plan for the housing of Roma. This Ministry has particularly defined the improvement of housing for Roma within the “National Housing Policy” document. However, measures stipulated in the Action plan for housing have not yet been realized.

By the initiative of the Secretariat for Roma National Strategy, the Ministry of Capital Investments formed a working group for monitoring the implementation of the action plan for the housing of Roma. This working group gave suggestions concerning part of the budget within the Ministry of Capital Investments, which refers to implementation of priority measures of the action plan for housing of Roma during 2007 and is in the part that refers to design of construction plans and building infrastructure.³⁷

The action plan for the area of housing stipulates the following: the improvement of legislative frameworks, as in republic laws and acts; the legalization of settlements and houses; the improvement and/or building infrastructure, streets and public areas; the improvement of existing housing units and building new ones; solutions for the needs of internally displaced persons concerning housing; urgent actions for improving or displacing slums; and the integration and inclusion of Roma in their neighborhoods. Flaws of this plan include the fact that stakeholders of these activities are not suggested and that funds necessary for the realization of these activities are not specified (though a framework budget had been prepared in the draft stage of the plan).

Housing for Roma and their settlements are mentioned in the Strategy for Poverty Reduction in the context of social housing. Annex SSS included measures, activities and priority tasks in connection to Roma settlements and housing.

A major problem found in all documents, including the Strategy for Integration and Empowerment of Roma, is the implementation at the local level, as clear (or any) coordination, duties and implementation strategy at the local level is not specified.

Currently, the area of housing, i.e. housing policy in Serbia, is not regulated. During the last 15 years the citizens had to solve housing issue on their own, with the occasional interference of the state or municipalities when they built apartments intended for specific groups of citizens.

At the republic level the area of housing falls within the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Capital Investments. The Ministry is relevant to the fields of telecommunications, transportation and construction. Until the 1990s, housing had had the status of public interest. When this status ceased to exist, the state’s interference in this area was reduced. Most problems occur at the level of local governments, but they do not have the mechanisms or capacity (institutional and financial) to solve the housing problems.

Most laws and documents on housing were adopted during 1990s, and the found law, the Law on Housing, was passed in 1992. There were several changes to this law before 2001, but no essential contributions were made to solving the housing problems, particularly for those groups of inhabitants that needed the state’s assistance to solve their housing problems. This Law also stipulates (Article 2)

³⁶ This number refers to voluntary return. It is assumed that the number of returnees from Western Europe is higher, as this process is in progress.

³⁷ Interview by the Minority Rights Center with Živojin Mitrović, director of Coordination Center for Roma Inclusion, Belgrade, 15 December 2006



the state's obligation to take measures in order to solve housing problems of socially imperiled groups. However, the measures are not defined precisely. The other law that is relevant for the issue of housing is the 2003 Law on Planning and Construction. This law is particularly important as it launched, once again, the process of legalizing facilities that were built illegally. The Law on Expropriation of 1994 stipulates the possibility of land expropriation, but it is nowadays rarely applied. The Draft Law on Social Housing has been in the process of creation and adoption since 2003. It stipulates measures for systematic solutions for the problems of social housing, on both republic and local levels.

Therefore, legislation framework is not adequate, as it does not offer answers and solutions for the key issues from the housing area. It is also very important to stress the lack of compliance among laws that are within the jurisdiction of different ministries (finance, mining, geology, agriculture, railway system, etc.) and that refer to housing, especially in regards to the issue of land use.

Various problems appear during the implementation of housing policies, mostly due to unrealistically high architecture and construction standards in Serbia, which cannot be achieved by most citizens, particularly by poor Roma population. These standards additionally make the legalization process more difficult. There is also a problem with land-registry, which is not updated for the whole territory of Serbia. This problem also slows down the process of legalization.

Specific problems of implementing laws, which are relevant for problems of Roma housing, refer to:

- Very distinct institutional discrimination by local authorities, secretariats, construction institutes, etc. Such discrimination is manifested through a lack of recognition of problems, and in turn an absence of solutions, dragging out cases concerning problems of Roma settlements and housing.

- Cities and municipalities in Serbia do not have large budgets, and few allotted or are ready to allot any funds for efforts made to solve the housing problems for Roma. A general lack of funding is a problem in many areas, but in regards to this issue, the bigger problem is the fact that funds for this area are not allotted sufficiently. However, there are also examples that show it is possible to improve living conditions in Roma settlements if there is good will, even when no funds are allotted for the housing of Roma. Within a project oriented towards improving the health of the Roma population, the Roma non-governmental organization YUROM Center from Niš and the City Healthcare Institute did a hygienic and epidemiological analysis of Roma settlements. This analysis showed that housing conditions endanger the health of the Roma population. In turn, the local government allotted funds, thirteen times larger than the original project received from donors, in order to build a sewage system in the settlement.³⁸

- In the cases of forced eviction, legislation of the Republic of Serbia does not provide either protection or guarantees to persons that are illegally settled on land or in a facility. There are few concrete provisions that refer to forced eviction. According to the Article 5 of the Law on Housing, it is possible to perform eviction of illegally settled persons on the basis of decision issued by municipal institutions and without a court decision. Evicted person can file a complaint against administrative procedure, but the complaint does not postpone eviction. The Government of Serbia and Montenegro ratified the UN International Pact on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and thus is obliged to guarantee protection from forced eviction. Article 11: State signatories must provide the realization of the right of every man to have appropriate living standard for him and his family, including adequate food, clothes and housing, as well as the continuous improvement of living conditions.

A large problem during the implementation of the laws, the Action Plan and other official documents is the low level of knowledge of employees in municipal/city and republic institutions and organizations about problems faced by Roma population. The low knowledge level, vaguely defined duties and responsibilities "supported" by stereotypes and prejudices are serious obstacles for the effective application of programs and projects that refer to Roma on both local and republic levels. Additionally, institutions are not ready to face the problems of discrimination and prejudices held by the majority population. This can be illustrated by the example of the Belgrade authorities' attempt to move Roma from an illegal settlement to the settlement Dr Ivan Ribar, followed by the improvement of the existing infrastructure and building a new one. After long and intensive protests by the inhabitants of the Dr. Ivan Ribar settlement, city authorities gave up this project.

³⁸ Report on the realization of the project "Monitoring and advocacy of the Roma community for improving hygiene of settlements in municipalities of Niš, Niška Banja, Bela Palanka and Aleksinac", YUROM Center from Niš, 2005.



It can be concluded that the implementation of the Action Plan for Housing is slower than those in other areas. In some areas, processes at the local level had begun earlier, as it was the case in Belgrade. City authorities formed a Coordination Board within the City Hall for improving the position of Roma. They also planned a project to create social housing 1,200 apartments, aimed at solving housing problems for some portion of the Roma population. Results of this project still cannot be assessed, as the building of these apartments is still in progress. This summer, the Ministry of Capital Investments began to more seriously plan an actualization of the measure from the Action

Plan. At the Conference on Housing, held this year in July, special attention was paid to Roma housing issues. The Ministry also formed a working group consisting of representatives of the Ministry's various sectors, the Director of the Secretariat for Roma Strategy, representatives from the non-governmental sector and from international organizations, as well as experts on the issue of Roma housing. According to Svetlana Ristić, the 2007 budget stipulates funds for Roma housing. Projects that will be realized will be connected to the implementation of existing projects, which already developed the capacity of local environments for the realization of similar programs.³⁹

On 20 and 21 December 2006, the conference "Consolidation and Legalization of Roma Settlements and Housing" was organized in Belgrade. The aim of the conference was to solve some problems in unhygienic Roma settlements. It was organized by the Office for Human and Minority Rights and the Ministry of Capital Investments in cooperation with the OSCE Mission in Serbia, the Council of Europe, and Organization for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights. The conference produced some very useful recommendations, which will be taken into account while working towards solutions to the problems of Roma housing in unhygienic settlements.⁴⁰

2.4. Healthcare

2.4.1. Current problems

The Roma population faces numerous obstacles in regards to accessing healthcare institutions, including a lack of knowledge and information, language barriers, financial barriers, a lack of residence registration and discrimination.⁴¹

Conditions in which socially imperiled Roma live are conducive to the development of infectious diseases. Roma's houses are often made of cardboard, wood and sheets. The food these people eat is of very poor quality and unhealthy. They live in areas in which the water is unhygienic, the food is kept and prepared inadequately and often in contact with infected substances. City communal services do not take away garbage from illegal settlements. The epidemiological situation in Roma settlements in Serbia has not been sufficiently analyzed, as the monitoring of infectious diseases is insufficient and inadequate in comparison to magnitude of the unhygienic situation

More than 100,000 citizens of Belgrade live in unhygienic conditions, 30,000 of them are Roma who live in unhygienic Roma settlements. These settlements are conducive to respiratory, intestinal and parasitic infectious diseases. However, the scope of these diseases is not known, as active epidemiological research is not done, due to a lack of funding.

Medical centers do not keep separate medical records for inhabitants of these settlements, so data about their diseases in comparison with general population cannot be analyzed. It is estimated that members of this population visit medical centers less than their needs demand. Many of them are unable to access their right to healthcare due to their inability to register residence in illegal settlements

According to estimations of epidemiologists, intestinal infectious diseases appear in Roma population ten times more often than in the general population in Belgrade, resulting from the unhygienic housing conditions and the lack of clean water, sewage system and garbage removal.⁴²

Economic relations and bad living conditions have resulted in a low level of basic hygienic prac-

39 Meeting of the working group of the Ministry of Capital Investments for implementation of the Action plan for housing of Roma, 7 September 2006

40 Conclusions of the conference "Consolidation and legalization of Roma settlements and housing" are stated in Annex II

41 Report of the World Bank about Roma in Serbia and Montenegro - 2005

42 Report "Roma's Health", OXFAM, Office in Belgrade, 2003.

tices for both children and adult Roma. According to 2001 OXFAM research, one third of Roma children never brush their teeth, almost half of them change underwear less than once a week and they almost never wash their hands. Fifty percent of adult Roma bathe once a week, the rest do it even more rarely. The percentage of smokers in Roma population is 80%, twice the percentage of the general population.

The average number of children per Roma family is five. This creates particular health risk for Roma women, as they often carry pregnancies without medical help, and their knowledge of reproductive health is very low. Despite frequent chronic diseases, Roma rarely go to medical institutions to get medical services. Therefore, only 1% Roma can expect to live more than 60 years, in comparison to 30% of total population.⁴³

2.4.2. Activities of state institutions

During the project period, the Ministry of Health showed a very proactive relationship in the process of implementing the Action Plan for Roma health. Throughout 2005 the deputy of the Ministry organized many roundtables and meeting with the civil sector on this issue. In December 2005 presenters planned and budgeted for 2006. Unlike the other ministries who often reject the invitations of the civil sector, the Ministry of Health organized a meeting of the directors of the institute for social protection from the whole of Serbia and the League of the Decade of Roma about future activities.

The institution does not have enough capacity to implement the program. The Ministry of Health is not the only body needed for the job. The good side is that process started in 2004, and now during the implementation of the Action Plan, the non-governmental sector already has a great deal of knowledge and experience in this field. This example shows the way in which the presence of good intentions, even without the necessary capacities, can start the process. Clearly the result of this earlier work, the Ministry of Health allotted in its 2007 budget, funds for the advancement of Roma health at an amount twice that allotted in 2006.

The Ministry of Health allotted 60,000,000 dinars (700,000 Euros) for projects for the advancement of the Roma population. Applications for projects were accepted by the health institute in cooperation with non-governmental organizations. A commission was formed for selecting projects which also worked with Roma leader Osman Balic. This commission has the mandate to select and realize projects. Ninety three applications were submitted, of which thirty two were selected in the first round. After re-evaluation, another thirteen were selected, meaning forty five projects were selected for financing. In light of the weak awareness of health institutions about the action plan and limited capacity, and majority of the projects were rejected yet a portion of the funding remained unspent.

The projects which began under the Ministry of Health of the Government of the Republic of Serbia did not carry out the goal of the Action Plan which was part of the Unity Action Plan for the Inclusion of Roma. As the first goal of the Action Plan is the create a base level for the health situation of Roma in the territory of Kosovo. That basic task should be the foundation for all action undertaken in the future.

The required goals and criteria in the Action Plan for health are based on the real needs for the improvement of healthcare for the Roma community. The following is required: the implimentation ofn health research on indicators of the quality of Roma health; secure plans for the existing systematic laws about healthcare with an emphasis on the right to helthcare; the spread of healthcare throughout the entire Roma population through the implimentatino of different health programs. Particularly emphasized was the area of housing because of negative consequences resulting from living in unhygienic conditions.

Of the projects already begun, none address the problem of unregistered housing or changing the system to better address the problem. The majority of these project generally pertain to reproductive health and immunization.

The budget allotted 500,000.00 dinars per project. Because of an insufficient number of „quality“ projects from the previous year, only 21,675,430.00 was spent on 43 projects carried out in the territory

43 Report “Roma’s Health”, OXFAM, Office in Belgrade, 2003.

44 Conference Roma’s Health – Decade of Roma Inclusion, PALGO Cenetr, 2005, Belgrade





of the Republic of Serbia.⁴⁵

The remaining money will not be used for medical costs of people who don't have health insurance, as it will be returned to the budget of the Serbian government and used for the same purpose next year.⁴⁶

Other programs which were not especially for roma, but worked in health and issues faced by the Roma population include: „Kontrol of Tuberculous in Serbia through the use of Observational therapy and aid to at risk populations“ and „AIDS – tracking epidemics in Serbia“ financed by the Global Fund for the fight against aids, malaria, and tuberculosous.

The ministry of health showed inciative in the inclusion of non-governmental organizations, however they did not adequately prioritize Roma health problems.

In regards to the implementation of programs on the local level for the health aspect of the Action Plan of the Decade of Roma Inclusion, a system of the health mediators in Serbia is still nonexistent. In Serbia, Roma are not trained in the health sector.

Regulations on the way in which access to healthcare can be achieved indirectly discriminate against Roma who don't have documentation of their residency. The right to health care in Serbia is guaranteed by regulations for all citizens but in practice for the realization of this right must be done though documentation of housing. As the poorest sector in Serbia, Roma do not have applications for residential papers and are therefore denied the right to healthcare except in cases of emergency.

Article 22 line 11 of the law on health insurance in the Republic of Serbia reads as follows: „persons of Roma nationality who because of traditional ways of life do not have documentation of housing in the Republic of Serbia.“ From this article it can be clearly seen that there are no direct discriminatory measures, however the law does not lend itself to practice applications.

Roma who recieve material social aid under the law about social protection, included in the law on health insurance, may recieve healthcare. However, the conditions for access such healthcare include the requirement of housing documentation.

In regards to accessing free medical help and emergency care Roma may access their right from required health insurance for whom expenses are covered by the Repulic's institute for health insurance.

2.5. Implementation of Action plans on a local level

The Ministry of Health showed a very proactive approach in the process of implementing the Action Plan for Improving the Health of Roma. During 2005, a representative of the Ministry, who was authorized in this field, participated in many round tables and meetings that were organized by the civil sector. Plans and the 2006 budget were presented last year in December.⁴⁷ Unlike other ministries, which agree to take part in discussions on the occasion of particular problems, upon invitations made by civil sector, the Ministry of Health is the only ministry that organized a meeting of directors of institutes for social care from the whole Serbia.

Therefore issues including the position of the local government and it after the new Constitution of Serbia and the first findings of the Decade of Roma are on the agenda of the League for the Decade of Roma, Roma political parties, Roma non-governmental organizations and the entire Serbian society.

One of the issues that continues to grow in importance is the issue of the social responsibility system for the Decade of Roma and the quality of relations between citizens and local authorities, i.e. participation level of Roma, Roma NGOs and central and local authorities in the political process of decision-making at local level.

The basic principle on which the Roma right to participate in the administration, in the creation and realization of plans, for the decade of Roma at the local level is that it is not a right that is given to Roma by their local government or by state authorities, nor it is a right that arises from international

45 Decision of the Ministry of Health ‘‘Plan of distribution of budget resources from apropration-463-donation and transfers to other governmental levels – reducing Roma’s health poverty.

46 Stated at the meeting of the Board for Roma’s Health, held on 7 December 2006. by Dr Đorđe Stojiljković, project coordinator for Roma from Decade of Roma Inclusion in Ministry of Health of the Republic of Serbia.

documents or pressures, but rather a fundamental rights of citizens and a founding principle of the democratic system of new Serbia, which aspire toward joining the European Union.

Currently the implementation of action plans is in progress in more than twenty towns in Serbia. These processes are the result of financial support from the European Commission and of informal pressure from the OSCE Office in Belgrade.

Nevertheless, this still unclear and informal system of “pushing” the Decade can be made much more efficient by larger participation of Roma political parties in local and central institutions or assemblies. By denying this right to administrate at the local community and state, and even at the municipal level, most municipalities can be said to be irresponsible authorities.

The existing situation shows that al democracy needs to be supported by participatory democracy. It is increasingly more obvious that much more is needed than just voting in elections in order to achieve democracy, i.e. the participation of Roma in local politics, where the action plans of the Decade of Roma would be considered priorities.

Characteristics of local governments who have participated in the realization of the Decade of Roma, to date, and suggestions for them include the following:

- Insufficient decentralization of authorities and low financial capacities on the local level and a high dependency on republic institutions;
- Large disproportion in most municipalities in Serbia;
- Lack of development strategies for municipalities, which implies a lack of any future planning;
- Lack of awareness and belief that the participation of Roma is necessary. Raising awareness should be the basic part of the national policy (civil activism);
- Cooperation of local government with non-governmental organizations becomes a model of success and the mainstay of the Decade of Roma;
- Insufficient sensibility of certain municipalities for the Decade of Roma as public interest;
- Common interest should enable the overcoming of current problems in the Roma non-governmental sector, such as the issue of sustainable funding and a lack self owned space for work. The problem of financial stability, especially of small local organizations, can be solved by establishing clear representation criteria and capacities of non-governmental organizations, by establishing budget funding for the support of non-governmental organizations in local governments, by organizing special commissions and transparent procedures for funding and by signing protocols on mutual cooperation;
- Insufficient affirmation of citizens’ direct participation in decision-making through referendum and civil initiatives;
- Improving legal and political frames for responsibility of local government for the Decade of Roma;
- Municipalities’ statutes and municipal regulations should contain a complete legal framework for the participation of minority communities at the local level.

The legal framework for direct civil participation of Roma in creating more efficient system of implementing plans of the Decade of Roma at local level includes the following documents – the Constitution of the Republic of Serbia, the Law on Local Government, the Law on Referendum and National Initiative, the Law on Free Access to Information of Public Importance and statutes of municipalities and cities.

In cooperation with the OSCE and the European Agency for Reconstruction the Office for Human and Minority Rights of the Republic of Serbia launched the project “Support for Roma”, aimed at the adoption of local action plans by local governments. Coordinators for Roma issues were engaged in 20 municipalities in Serbia within this project. Each municipality received 18,700 euros for Roma issues from the European Agency for Reconstruction and Development. Part of this project is entitled “The Implementation of Action Plans by Local Governments”. Implementation of local action plans is in progress in all 20 chosen municipalities. However, they are in different stages of realization.

Municipalities in which “The Implementation of Action Plans by Local Governments” is being realized include the following: Aleksinac, Barajevo, Bela Palanka, Bujanovac, Grocka, Negotin, New Belgrade, Novi Sad, Kikinda, Koceljeva, Kruševac, Kragujevac, Pirot, Požarevac, Sombor, Šabac, Valjevo, Vranje, Vlasotince and Niš.

Local action plans are currently being created in the following municipalities - Aleksinac, Bu-





janovac and New Belgrade. In Barajevo, Bela Palanka and Vranje action plans were submitted for adoption. In Negotin all four action plans were adopted, but now the adoption of the 2007 budget lies ahead.

The Municipality of Kragujevac has also adopted all four action plans, in compliance with the areas established by the Decade – education, employment, healthcare and housing. The budget, intended for the implementation of these plans, stipulated 100,000.00 dinars for this municipality in 2006, while the 2007 budget has not yet been adopted.

In the Municipality of Sombor, a local action plan for education was adopted, by the 2007 budget of 1,100,000.00 dinars.

In the Municipality of Valjevo's local action plan for education was adopted in 2006, with budget funds of 500,000 dinars, while the 2007 budget has not been adopted yet.

The implementation of projects has been planned, but nothing has been done so far in the following municipalities: Grocka, Novi Sad, Kikinda, Koceljeva, Kruševac, Pirot, Požarevac, Šabac, Vlasotince and Niš.

There is no legislative regulation that obliges local governments to create and adopt local action plans for Roma, so this action is performed only according to readiness of local authorities to cooperate.⁴⁷

2.6. Other areas

In addition to determined priorities of the Decade of Roma Inclusion, other areas that directly affect these priorities include the problems of realizing the right to legal subjectivity and discrimination.

2.6.1. Problem of realizing the right to legal subjectivity

Between 1991 and 2001, general economic crisis and war conflicts in the country led to great migration in the country and the region, including the migration of Roma. War conflicts in Kosovo and Metohia led to exile of the largest part of Roma population from the Province. The result of these migrations is that Roma from Kosovo and Metohia and Roma from rural environments and undeveloped municipalities from the south of Serbia settled in the largest urban centers in Serbia.

A certain number of Roma reside in informal settlements, in which they usually live in shacks made of metal and cardboard remains, dilapidated and abandoned warehouses, containers and abandoned car wrecks in dumps or in their vicinity, under bridges or in open fields. Due to an inability to register their residence in settlements without legal ground for housing, they are deprived of fundamental social and economic rights, including the right to healthcare, social benefits, education and employment. They do not even have the right to vote in the elections.

According to the research of Argument and Minority Rights Center, 46% of 36,702 Roma cannot register residence in the place they live in. Thus they cannot access the fundamental human rights tied to the place of residence – they cannot go to school, find a job or receive medical treatment. They live in a parallel world, outside the system of Serbia.

According to the Law on Residence of the Republic of Serbia, the Ministry of the Interior has the right to demand identity card or some other document to confirm identity or prove other important facts in the procedure of registration. According to the Article 5 of this Law, "Other documents particularly apply to the agreement of apartment rental, the agreement of tenancy, the applicant's statements that he/she permanently lives at the place in which he/she has registered residence." Roma, mostly those internally displaced from Kosovo and Metohia, do not have documents and cannot obtain them. At the same time, the Ministry of the Interior does not accept an applicant's statement as a legal ground for housing. Therefore, Roma that live in informal settlements cannot register residence and do not have

⁴⁷ Project coordinator of the "Support for Roma" from the Office for Human and Minority Rights of the Republic of Serbia. The office is a legal part of the dismissed Ministry of Human and Minority Rights of the Republic of Serbia. Its main aim is to incite, coordinate and monitor activities of state institutions in the realization of human and minority rights in Serbia.

access to fundamental rights.

One of the main causes for the lack of documents in Roma population is the problem of entering birth information for those persons who are not registered at birth registries, or who know they were registered but do not have proof of it. Experience shows that relevant state institutions do not have universal practice in regard to this issue. Namely, if a person has never been registered in birth registry, it should be done subsequently. As these persons do not have any proof of identity, administrative organs advise them to prove the facts which are necessary for subsequent registration through court proceedings. However, there is no uniform court practice. Some courts claim authority and perform the procedure for confirming identity. After procedure is over, a person is registered in birth registry and problem is solved. However, other courts claim they do not have jurisdiction over such cases and advise parties to procedure for confirming blood relations with parents. An additional problem is the fact that some courts declare their jurisdiction according to place of residence, and other according to the place of temporary residence. There is often negative conflict of jurisdiction between judicial and administrative bodies. Obviously it is hard to find expert attorneys in such complex legal situations, particularly when it is taken into account that parties are ignorant of legal issues and often have problem with proficiency in the official language.

At the end of 2005 the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights and Minority Rights Center formed a working group to create an action plan for Roma personal documents. Group participants included representatives appointed by the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of State Administration and Local Government, the Ministry of Labor, Employment and Social Policy, the Ministry of Justice, the Refugee Commissariat of the Republic of Serbia, the National Council of Roma National Minority and representatives of international organizations (OSCE, UNHCR, UNDP) and of civil society (Minority Rights Center, Praxis). Experts of the Republic Geodesy Institute, City of Belgrade and Municipality of Zvezdara also participated in creation of this action plan.

The working group reached the conclusion that problems for Roma in informal settlements, who cannot register residence, can be solved by making changes and amendments to the Decision on determining house numbers, denoting house numbers and denoting names of places, streets and squares. Changes and amendments would provide determining house numbers for facilities that are not built according to the law. Those numbers would be valid for some time and would not imply legal status of the settlement. Thus Roma in informal settlements will be able to register an address, in order to gain legal subjectivity and the opportunity to access rights like all other citizens. The Government of Serbia is authorized to change of the mentioned Decision.

The working group has not found a common solution to the problem of entering birth facts for persons that are not registered at the birth registry. Representatives of non-governmental and international organizations at the working group were of opinion that it was necessary to reach a decision that would define procedure and authority for solving the problems of Roma and other imperiled categories in cases of registration in birth registries.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights ceased to exist, delaying that initiative of this working group.

2.6.2. Discrimination

Roma face discrimination at almost all levels of society and in practice receive little legal protection. The adoption of anti-discrimination law would be a first step towards solving this problem. In this issue, Serbia does not respect set deadlines. Draft law has been in the stage of waiting for a very long time, which was explained by the dilemma about its adoption at the level of state union of Serbia or Montenegro or at the level of the Republic of Serbia. Clearly this dilemma no longer exists. However, it is still delayed, as the Office for Human and Minority Rights again began the process of creating the same law, with the existing draft law as the basis for the new one.⁴⁸ The adoption of the Law against Discrimination is important, but not sufficient. The fact that discrimination is a taboo is illustrated by the

⁴⁸ Meeting on the implementation of action plans for the Decade of Roma Inclusion, 24 September 2006





example that on policy level it appears in some general documents (Strategy for Integration and Empowerment of Roma), as well as in documents that treat some specific areas (Strategy for the Improvement of Roma Education in Serbia, the United Action Plan for Education), but not in all documents. Most documents do not stipulate preventive measures that can decrease discrimination. Nevertheless, these examples show that dealing with the problem of discrimination is of a declarative nature, as mechanisms for prevention, monitoring and sanctioning discrimination have not been developed yet. Additionally, it seems that there is no awareness of the need for this problem to become one of priorities in the process of improving Roma position in Serbia.

Discrimination against Roma is insufficiently researched and cases of discrimination are rarely reported to state institutions. Non-governmental organizations, the Minority Rights Center, the European Roma Rights Center and the Humanitarian Law Center have recorded numerous cases of discrimination, unlawful treatment by the police and violence committed by skinheads and other individuals.⁴⁹

2.7. State policy for improving the position of Roma

Several strategic documents that treat specific problems of the Roma community were created between 2002 and 2005. The Ministry of Human and Minority of Serbia and Montenegro created the Strategy for the Integration and Empowerment of Roma and the Ministry of Education of Serbia created the Strategy for Improvement of Education for Roma in Serbia. Unfortunately, despite the fact that these strategic documents were created three years ago, relevant institutions have not yet adopted them. It can be assumed that the reason for this situation is the issue of authority, as the Strategy for Integration and Empowerment of Roma was made at the level of the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro and the Strategy for Improvement of Education for Roma referred to Serbia. Concerning the educational strategy, which was created during the time when Gašo Knežević was the minister of education, during the gap created by the changing Government, with the new structure of the Ministry of Education and Sports (MES), which has worked without the Educational Council until recently. However, the National Strategy for the Access of Serbia and Montenegro to the European Union, in the part referring to education, it is stated that the adoption of the Strategy for Improvement of Education is one of MES's priorities. Despite formal restrictions, there is an obvious lack of political will on the part of decision-makers in this case. Some of strategic directions for the improvement of education of this community are integrated in the general development policies of Serbia (Strategy for Poverty Reduction, National Employment Strategy 2006–2008, National Plan for Children, Education Strategy 2005–2010). Nevertheless, this case is not quite clear in regard to possibilities of implementation methodology, and the needs of Roma are not essentially integrated into these policies. Additionally, the implementation mechanisms and the monitoring of results achieved are not defined precisely.

3. EU Initiatives and connection to the Decade of Roma Inclusion

The European Commission paid particular attention to estimations of the position of Roma in its yearly report for 2006 on the Strategy of Enlargement and Progress that the Republic of Serbia achieved in its process toward integration with the countries of the European Union.

The adoption of the action plan was praised in the European Commission report and it was noted as a sign of progress in the fulfillment of requirements for joining the European Union.

However, the report further states that the Roma situation, particularly the situation of internally displaced persons, remains uncertain. It is mentioned that many Roma do not have either basic personal documents or access to any kind of social care system. The report also states that Roma children face

⁴⁹ Memorandum, Protection of Roma Rights in Serbia and Montenegro, European Roma Rights Center, UNOHCR

a series of obstacles in education and that they are wrongly placed in schools for children with mental disorders. It is estimated that housing conditions in numerous Roma settlements are very bad and that the unemployment rate is very high.⁵⁰

The European Agency for Reconstruction and Development funded the program “Support for Roma” with 1 million euros. This program relies on stipulated activities from the Decade’s action plans. It supports the introduction of assistants for the support of Roma in education, 20 municipal coordinators for Roma, the implementation of action plans at the local level, the work of the Secretariat for Roma and that of the Office for Returnees.

4. Recommendations

General Recommendations

- To form a Ministry of Minorities within the Government of Serbia
- To adopt the Strategy for Integration and Empowerment of Roma, as well as the action plans for areas except the four already recognized as priority areas by the Decade of Roma Inclusion (social care, media and information, culture, anti-discrimination, the position of women, internally displaced persons, returnees according to the Agreement on Readmission, personal documents);
 - To create policies with measures of affirmative actions, which is necessary for Roma in all areas of social life, precisely defining criteria, mechanisms and stakeholders for the implementation of these measures;
 - To define and determine mechanisms for the implementation of the policy for improving the position of Roma, within the implementation of general policies and existing action plans;
 - To provide continuous annual allotting of funds for the implementation of action plans;
 - To include Roma in the creation and implementation of policies that refer to the position of the Roma national community and to enable transparency in planning and realizing measures of the action plans and reporting on achieved results;
 - To develop a system of monitoring the results of action plans implemented in the areas of education, healthcare, employment and housing, which should contain quantitative and qualitative indicators;
 - To establish a system of horizontal and vertical communication and mechanisms for the efficient implementation of prioritized measure within each system and institutions of the state administration that is responsible for the implementation of action plans;
 - To employ members of Roma nationality in all institutions that are relevant for the implementation of action plans (particularly at the national level);
 - To form an inter-sector body for the implementation of action plans. Members of the inter-sector body should be at the level of ministers’ assistants and represent four ministries from the priority areas of the Decade of Roma (education, healthcare, employment and housing). Participation of the following ministries is also necessary – the Ministry of Local Government, the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Justice;
 - To define the status of the Secretariat for Roma Strategy and to provide conditions for its sustainability through funding from the republic’s budget. The Secretariat should be a part of the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights, which should be established at the level of the republic;
 - To adopt the Law against Discrimination, which should be in compliance with recommendations of the European Union and with the UN model against discrimination;
 - The problem of discrimination should become one of the priority activities in the improvement of the Roma position. To develop programs/system of prevention, monitoring and sanctioning discrimination in all fields;
 - To appoint an assistant that will be engaged in the issue of discrimination within the Ombudsman Office;

50 http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2006/Nov/sr_sec_1389_en.pdf





- To develop methodology that will provide an accurate census of the Roma population in Serbia;
- To make changes and amendments to the Decision of determining house numbers, denoting house numbers and denoting names of settlements, streets and squares. It would enable Roma, who live in informal settlements, to register their address, therefore gaining access to all rights just like other citizens of Serbia.

a) education

The Ministry of Education and Sports (MES) should do the following:

- Form a “Center for the Improvement of Roma Education”, in cooperation with the National Council of Roma National Minority (NCRNM) and the Open Society Institute (OSI);
- Form a transparent and available data base about Roma children who are included in schools and preschools. The base should be created in cooperation with local governments and e-mailed to Roma organizations;
- Reconsider the possibilities of existing information systems and their availability to pre-school institutions, schools, local governments and Roma organizations;
- Connect local governments, educational institutions and NGOs in municipalities with Roma population, thus inciting or continuing activities for the creation of local action plans, supported by NCRNM;
- In coordination with the National Education Council (NEC), create and adopt regulations that define specific items for the funding of the educational system, such as providing additional funds for schools that enroll Roma children and organizing classes according to children’s needs, as well as to define a system of rewarding institutions that achieve the best results in work with Roma children;
- In cooperation with School Administrations (SA) and municipal authorities, create and adopt temporary regulations for reconsidering the status of children that are wrongly sent to special schools (particularly for students of I–II grades of primary school);
- In coordination with the NEC, reconsider the funding of special schools (number of enrolled children and disability categories) and the funding of benefits and assistance, and redirect part of the funds to regular schools, as for Roma parents these funds are crucial when deciding about their children’s education;
- In coordination with NEC, NCRNM and municipalities, create documents for the regulation of criteria and procedures in measures of affirmative actions, which would lead to the changes of legislative regulations;
- In cooperation with SA and municipalities, inform Roma parents about enrollment and obligatory character of enrollment in pre-schools and schools (through official notices, leaflets, NGO-s, Roma media, etc.);
- Enable the enrollment of Roma children in pre-school institutions with or without documents;
- In cooperation with NCRNM, consider the proposal of the law on pre-school education and include in this law an affirmative action plan that would enable the enrollment of Roma children in the first grade without a certificate of attending the pre-school, due to insufficient capacities and other obstacles;
- In cooperation with SA, create capacities of pre-school institutions for overall enrollment of Roma children;
- In cooperation with municipalities and NCRNM, provide free food, workbooks and additional activities for socially imperiled children;
- In cooperation with municipalities, create opportunities for two-year pre-school preparation of Roma children;
- In cooperation with municipalities, create statutes of pre-school institutions and regulations for the enrollment of children (existing regulations give priority to children whose parents are employed; thus they are indirectly discriminatory and need to be changed);
- In cooperation with SA, reconsider the concept of assessing children’s abilities before enrollment in the first grade of primary school. Roma assistants or representatives of Roma organizations should be included in this process, so as to reduce the language barrier;

- Provide engagement of Roma assistants in schools and legally regulate their status, job description, rights and responsibilities;
- In cooperation with SA and schools with significant number of Roma children, provide education that satisfy children's needs;
- In cooperation with SA, establish a system for the evaluation of schools that passed the training for active teaching, i.e. the training for monitoring education quality by changing methods and techniques of teaching and by applying modules of active teaching intended for teachers that have Roma children in their classes;
- Include indicators of discrimination into the Document for self-evaluation of schools, according to which the analysis of discrimination and segregation in schools will be obtained;
- Based on results of the self-evaluation in certain key areas of work, create an action plan for desegregation and the prevention of discrimination as a part of the School Development Plan;
- In cooperation with NCRNM and the Open Society Institute, form an expert working group that would create a program proposal for the inclusion of primary and secondary school children (older than other students of the same grade) into the system of regular education. This should be done after studying some realized programs from the country and region (national project).

The National Council of Roma National Minority (NCRNM) should do the following:

- Fund the collection of data about Roma children, which would be performed by non-governmental organizations;
- Local government should create and adopt a protocol at municipal level about collecting data about Roma children. It is necessary to include departments for social activities, offices for Roma, local refugee commissars, the Ministry of the Interior, the Refugee Commissariat of the Republic of Serbia and NGOs. It should also ensure the exchange of information and the detection of Roma children, particularly displaced and children of asylum-seekers, so that these children can be systematically included.

b) employment

- Local government should establish mechanisms for inclusion in the implementation of action plans.
- It is necessary to perform affirmative action aimed at increasing the number of Roma in state administration institutions, particularly by providing a quota for Roma students in internship and volunteer programs in state administration institutions, by granting scholarships to the best Roma students and by providing job positions in the institutions for these students.
- The Ministry of Local Government should send directions to the Department for Social Activities aimed at helping Roma to write complaints to the inspection in cases of remuneration due to discrimination by employers who gave up employment.
- The Ministry of Labor, Employment and Social Policy should inform the Employment Service of the giving of subventions for self-employment for categories of "members of ethnic minorities in which the unemployment rate is high."

It is necessary to provide better cooperation between the non-governmental sector and the National Employment Service in the following cases:

- 1) In informing Roma of their rights regarding employment and the collection of applications;
- 2) In opening clubs for training and job searching near or in Roma settlements. Services of the Employment Services should be made more available to Roma;
- 3) In the implementation of programs for self-employment that allow for additional points for unemployed persons of Roma nationality;
- 4) In creating and developing institutional programs aimed at the employment of Roma and the creation of possibilities for the Roma national community to respond to program requirements (e.g. in the process of approving grants for self-employment of Roma, possible obstacles should be taken into account, such as the small number of Roma that own property, the complexity of the application process, language barriers in understanding application documents, problems of providing guarantees, etc.);





5) In applying for micro loans to unemployed Roma, it is necessary to organize trainings and to give support to Roma.

- In programs of training and obtaining knowledge and skills it is necessary to apply the principle of gender equality and to enable the participation of Roma women; to develop programs aimed at economic empowerment of Roma women, as they are a doubly discriminated population;

- In cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Sports it is necessary to develop and promote programs aimed at the economic empowerment of Roma women that have not completed primary education, such as professional training programs (trade trainings, agriculture, etc.);

- The Center for Social Work and psychologist should organize activating seminars aimed at motivating the Roma population, i.e. it is necessary to affect motivation of the target group; to develop programs of economic empowerment of socially imperiled Roma, particularly those from unhygienic settlements and slums;

- To coordinate with other agencies in order to find flexible mechanisms, particularly at the level, for obtaining documents for Roma and their integration in the labor market;

- Sensitization of employees in the employment offices for working with Roma (about discrimination, its sanctioning, obstacles that Roma national community face, language barriers, etc.); to create programs to provide information about fight against discrimination in the area of employment;

- To include representatives of Roma national community in creating and developing institutional programs, policies and mechanism aimed at employment of Roma;

- To publish programs and announcements for employment and self-employment of Roma in the Romany language;

- To take care about the sustainability of programs that are funded by donors and about possibilities to continue their implementation and funding by institutions;

- In include province institutions in all activities;

- To include the Roma population from Timočka krajina in the entire program of efficient implementation of the action plan for employment for next year, not only large cities (Niš, Belgrade, Kragujevac, etc.);

- To change the awareness of the majority population, not only that of Roma;

- To pay more attention to the group of Roma paper collectors.

c) housing

- It is necessary to change political and professional attitudes toward requirements for ownership of illegally built houses and for professional and administrative institutions that are included in the process

- To demand that illegally built houses comply with construction rules and plans after these regulations are adjusted to existing forms of informal settlements in general and of Roma settlements in particular.

- It is necessary to create a construction plan that would improve the existing situation, and not ignore it.

- No one should insist on building houses according to standards of high-quality construction, but stipulate amendments to standards of construction procedures.

- It is necessary to accept as legal the houses that are not finished but are in use, as well as houses that are partially or completely made of non-standard materials and by methods that do not comply with construction standards.

- Owners of illegally built houses should provide proof that he built the facility on his land, as those that built on their own land and can prove that are given preference over others.

- Owners of houses that built on land that belonged to other individuals should be assisted in negotiating with the landowner about purchase of that land, about renting or other like arrangements.

- It is necessary to legalize the entire settlement, and not just the individual houses as is often assumed.

- Geographic location should also be considered, as well as the access to transport systems, in addition to the most important criteria such as sustainability and ownership.

Process of legalizing and improving should be conducted in seven stages. These are the following:

- 1) First – City Hall should make decisions on the legalization of Roma settlements in a local area.
- 2) Second – Ownership relations should be defined according to negotiations and agreements with owners/users, aimed at creating opportunities for making a standard settlement.
- 3) Third – It is necessary to create an action plan for the overall improvement of Roma settlements.
- 4) Fourth – It is necessary to create a construction plan, which is an integral part of the action plan. However, it should be adopted in a separate procedure stipulated by the law. The construction plan will serve for dividing public and private land, and later for its further development.
- 5) Fifth – It is necessary to divide private and public land into settlements according to the construction plan, as well to solve the issue of private land relations.
- 6) Sixth – It is necessary to reach decisions on the legalization of individual houses, in compliance with the construction plan and with the performed division of land (land division should be enough for confirming the legal status of facilities and no additional procedures should be necessary).
- 7) Seventh – It is necessary to provide a normal and usual course of settlement development and to enable the implementation of other programs needed for overall development of the settlements. This is actually a step towards raising Roma settlements to conditions equal with other parts of the city.

d) healthcare

It is necessary to:

- Continually inform Roma from Roma settlements about procedures for obtaining health cards;
- Confirm the number of people that do not have health insurance;
- Perform continuous research of the population that is included in healthcare programs launched by the Ministry of Health, so that situations before and after activities can be compared;
- Support the proposal of the Ministry of Health to adopt an act that would give a detailed explanation of Article 22, point 11 of the Law on Health Insurance of the Republic of Serbia;
- Organize meetings of the Healthcare Board, which will be attended by representatives of the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Local Government (as they are all relevant for the issue of personal documents);
- Create record files in cooperation with relevant ministries, issued by the Ministry of the Interior, which would enable the registration of people without health insurance among specific and at risk groups of people;
- Hold the firm attitude that part of the funds intended for projects for Roma's health, should be allotted to people without health insurance, until they become integrate into the regular system of health insurance;
- Educate employees within the primary healthcare sector about specific characteristic of the Roma population;
- Enable the empowerment capacities of Roma NGOs that are partners in the implementation of healthcare projects for Roma, launched by the Ministry of Health;
- Perform continuous monitoring and publish results of evaluation questionnaires within projects for the healthcare of Roma;
- Improve standardized data collecting in cooperation with the Statistics Institute of Serbia, so that they may comply with the standardized database that is available for launching new activities and for monitoring existing ones.⁵¹

⁵¹ This recommendations were prepared by the members of all board which are included in „Liguae for decade“, those memebers are the following : Milica Simić (Hildren's Roma Renter), Osman Balić (YUROM Center), Marjan Muratović (JAK-ER), Slavica Vasić (Bibija), Nataša Kočić (Roma Education Found), Dejan Dimitrov (Unia of Roma Students), Hajrija Mujović (Unia for Medicin Law), Jadranka Stojanović (Open Society Institute), Tanja Jovanović (Unia of Roma Students), Dimitrijević Marija (Unia of Roma Women, Osvit), Đorđe Stojoljković (Ministry of Health), Aleksandra Jović (Strategy for Decrising of Poornest), Rade Ćirić (Center for Human Resurs), Tanja Kostić (Democratic Roma Unia), Đurdica Zornić (Bibija), Sava Ibrahimović (Unia of Roma. of Roma,Sait Balić), Nebojša Silistarević (Roma Cultural Center Vranjska Banja), Anita Kurtić (Human Roma Unia), Vera Kurtić





ANNEX I

Local projects within areas included in the United Action Plan for Roma Inclusion in Serbia

a) education

Generally there were local programs that encouraged school attendance by Roma children. However, there were no special programs intended for Roma girls.

During 2006 the Center for Interactive Pedagogy and the Open Society Institute implemented the following four projects:

1. "Kindergarten as a Family Center for Roma Children" was implemented in the territories of Belgrade, Sombor, Surdulica, Subotica, Kragujevac, Niš, Kruševac, Čantavir, Bogojevo and Rtanj. Activities were performed from 1997 until 2006 and they were aimed at affecting the Roma community and educational institutions. About 4,000 children were included in the program, 80% being of Roma nationality. There were also about 100 adults, 70% of which were Roma. Some groups were integrated into the work of regular pre-school institutions. Many Roma assistants were educated and a model of their work was developed. Interest for the pre-school education of children, as a necessary requirement for successful education, increased. Motivation of parents to help their children in their studies was also growing, so that some mothers were also educated during the program. Parents had better and more frequent cooperation with schools than other Roma families. Representatives of Roma NGOs established cooperation with schools. Capacities of partner Roma NGOs were also improved.

2. "Equal Chances – Integration of Roma Children and Young People into the Education System". The project stakeholder is the Open Society Institute. Partner organizations include the Center for Interactive Pedagogy, the Roma Information Center and the Roma Education Center. It was realized within the Roma Education Initiative, the Education Support Program, and the Open Society Institute.

It was implemented in the territories of Niš and Kragujevac during the school years 2003/2004 and 2004/2005. External evaluation showed that pupils of Roma nationality that worked according to methodology "Step by Step" had better grades than pupils in other classes from the same schools.

3. "Equal Chances in High School Education" has been implemented since 2005 in Kragujevac, Niš and Belgrade and will end in 2007. Partners in this project include the Roma Education Center from Niš and "Stablo" from Kragujevac. Implementation was also supported by the Pestalogi Children's Foundation. By the end of 2007, teachers will be trained for adapt school curricula according to the model of intercultural school (curricular/extra-curricular), for the development of models of education for children by other pupils of the same age, launching initiative for accepting the model by relevant institutions (the Ministry of Education and Sports, the Roma National Council, etc.).

After three years (until 2007), there is a possibility to continue this project for another three years (replication of model in other environments).

4. "Inclusion Education – from Practice toward Policy" is the project that is realized in the following towns in Serbia – Kikinda, Novi Sad, Belgrade, Kragujevac, Kraljevo, Užice, Zaječar, Niš, Vranje and Pančevo. The project is realized in two directions: inclusion education through a network of teachers and schools and educational inclusion – local teams. Networks of Inclusion Education have

(Women's Space), Dejan Živković (Roma Union, Prokuplje), Ana seferović, Davor Marković (Gypsy soul), Jasna Kronja (Care International), Tanja Vasić (Democratic Roma Union), Aleksandar Šanjević (Citysen's Initiatives), Vesna Kamenarović (Secretary for Labour and Employment), Maja Branković (Secretary for Labour Employment and for equal Gender's Wrighti), Ljiljana Milovanović (National Service for Employment), Eduard Čelikijan (National Service for Employment), Rosimirka Todorović (Ministry for Labour and Social Policy), Jelena Milovanović (Team for the implementation of strategy for decreasing of poverty), Vesna Acković (Ministry foreducation and sport, Angelina Skarep (School's direction Valjevo), Ružica Nikolić (Roma Student's

been founded in 10 towns so far. These networks bring together officials from educational institutions, trainings and preparing collection of good practice examples.

Other local projects aimed at improving Roma education include the following:

- **“Cooperation”**, realized by the Roma Education Center from Subotica from September 2005 to September 2006. The project was aimed at increasing Roma inclusion from Subotica in regular educational system.

- **“Together toward the Goal”** was implemented in Obrenovac by Rom from Obrenovac, with the main aim of increasing the number of enrolled Roma in pre-school institutions and in the first grade of primary school.

- “Roma School” is a project that carried out by the Union of Roma Students from Novi Sad. It lasted until the end of 2006. Beneficiaries are children (ages 8–14), who were given social support, daycare, preparation for enrolling schools and pre-school institutions, financial support, compensatory and additional classes. The main project aim is the continuous assistance of Roma children from socially imperiled families.

- **“Education of Roma Children in Serbia and the Civil Participation of Roma Community”** – stakeholders and partners of this project include AFOD from Great Britain and Irish Aid from Ireland, and the implementation partner is the Roma Children’s Center from Belgrade. The project lasts two years, from 1 April 2006 to 31 March 2008 and it will be done at the territory of Belgrade. The aims of the project are education of Roma children and their affirmation in the school system. It is directed toward sensitization of people employed in schools so that they could be able to recognize specific needs of Roma children, that Roma community and schools could be more connected and that Roma could be more involved in their children’s education. After the six-month implementation results showed an increased number of Roma children enrolled in primary schools, a lower drop out rate and an increased rate of school attendance by Roma children.

- **“Educational and Recreation Program for Refugees, Displaced and Roma Children in Serbia”** is a project that implemented by the Italian Consortium for Solidarity, assisted by its executive partner UNHCR and in cooperation with local partners including the Association of Roma Students from Novi Sad, “Roma Life” from Železnik, “Friendship Hands” from Kraljevo, the Roma Cultural Center from Vranjska Banja and “Narajana” from Preševo. It lasted from 1 January to 31 December 2006. It was funded by UNHCR. Project activities were aimed at the integration of refugees, displaced and local poor children in local environment through educational, social and recreational activities, which were carried out in collective centers and local communities in Novi Sad, Železnik, Kraljevo, Niš, Leskovac, Bela Palanka, Aleksinac, Kuršumljija, Vranjska Banja and Preševo.

Research *“Why Do Roma Children Drop Out of School”* was conducted in cooperation with the Roma Democracy Center and the research agency Argument in the territories of Kolubara and Mačva Districts during 2006.

The Strategy for Education of Roma and local Action plans for the education of Roma were created in Valjevo in cooperation with the Municipality of Valjevo, the School Administration of Valjevo, the Roma Democracy Center, the National Employment Service (Valjevo office), the Center for Social Work and relevant expert institutions. The budget for the implementation of the local action plan in the Municipality of Valjevo is 500,000.00 dinars.

The national project *“Wider Access to Pre-School Education for Roma Children in the munic-*

Union), Nada Dimović (Education Roma Center), Danijela Petrović (Roma Center for Democracy), Radojka Pavlović (Cityzen’s Initiative), Milena Mihajlović (Center for interactive pedagogy), Ismet Jašarević (Center for affirmation and integration of Roma), Petar Antić (Minority Right Center), Goran Stanojević (Roma Human Union, Rom), Ljuna koka (Nationaly Council oh Roma Minority), Vera Erac (Italian Conzorcium for Solidarity), Marija Aleksandrović (Roma Resurs Center), Sanja Tasić (Roma Education Center), Anne Maria Čuković (Secretary for Roma National Strategy), Snežana Vuković (Ministry for education and sport), Ivana Ćirković (Tim for the implementation of strategy decrising of poorest).





palities of Valjevo and Šabac” was realized in Valjevo and Šabac. Projects in each municipality included 24 Roma children. They attended preparation pre-school programs from March until August 2006 (pilot stage). The continuation of the project is expected. There are two more projects from the Local action plans that are being realized – “*Education of Roma – Solution for the Future*” and “*Inclusion of Roma Children in the System of Pre-School Education at Local Level.*”

A main problem for most projects dealing with the education of Roma is their lack of sustainability, i.e. they remain at the level of short term projects. This means that actions will be performed only within duration of the project and will not result in any systematic changes.

b) employment

Local projects of non-governmental organizations that were involved in employment of Roma during 2006 include the following:

1. The Roma Association “Sait Balić” from Niš implemented the project “*The Promotion of Local Strategy and Local Plans for Employment of Roma in Niš and southeastern Serbia – Studying and Employment*”. The project lasted from September 2005 till September 2006. The idea of forming an agency for the encouragement of Roma in Niš was further developed through recent stages of the project. The agency in Niš is informal organizational model which works on taking active employment measures to incite processes in local communities that would lead to an increased number of Roma ready to educate themselves, to launch their own business ideas, or to open and register their own companies or stores. Agency activities are performed within the Association of Roma as a pilot project, which should obtain official certification of the National Employment Service during next project year. Thus it could legally perform activities that are stipulated in the recent Law on Employment and the National Employment Strategy.

Cooperation was established with the National Employment Service, the Regional Agency for Small and Medium Companies, the Municipal Employment Council and the Workers University.

During the project, twenty Roma launched their own businesses (at the year level) and 150 unemployed Roma attended training for founding and conducting business (at the year level).

The main problems that the Agency faces include the following:

1. Unemployed Roma insufficiently participate in programs of active employment policy (education, internships, active job searching, etc.);
2. There are no specific programs of vocational trainings for women who completed secondary education and for raising education level of unemployed Roma;
3. There is no determined program of trainings for establishing and conducting business and for informing the unemployed about the possibility of financial support through the National Employment Service;
4. It is necessary ensure that activities will be continuous and to ensure connections among social partners through the establishment and work of bodies for monitoring and realizing the strategy for employment at the local level and regular consideration of unemployment problem of Roma population;
5. Insufficient efficiency in everyday work of members of the Association Roma that work in the Agency.

2. BIBIJA – Roma Women Center from Belgrade implemented the project “*Economic Empowerment: Increasing Opportunities for Employment and Self-Employment of Roma Women*”. The project was realized in Belgrade and Smederevo from 5 April 2006 until 15 October 2006. The target group was comprised of Roma women and their families from 6 settlements in Belgrade – Deponija, Orlovsko naselje, Rakovica, Resnik, Smederevo and Železnik, which have not been included in projects of Bibija so far. A group of direct beneficiaries consisted of 90 Roma women from these settlements who took part in the workshops. Indirect beneficiaries included all those people that receive information indirectly. Seven of these women will attend courses at the National University “Božidar Adžija”.

Aims and tasks of the project included:

1. Raising awareness of Roma families from 6 settlements in Belgrade about the

importance of education for girls, by informing and educating about rights and opportunities for employment;

2. Improving starting points for employment of Roma women from Belgrade by educating them on active job searching and vocational training, in cooperation with the National Employment Service and the National University “Božidar Adžija”;

3. The Yugoslav Association for Culture and Education of Roma – JAK-ER from Leskovac implemented the project “Employment through Knowledge” from September 2005 to September 2006. The main aim of the project was to increase opportunities for the employment of the Roma population in Leskovac.

A club for job searching in Roma settlements was opened in Leskovac (aimed at re-socialization, active job searching, writing CV, etc.). JAK-ER also created a database about the employment and qualifications of Roma population in Leskovac.

All participants have successfully completed trainings for the launching of small businesses, development of business plans and how to apply for grants and loans. The new club conducts a campaign for informing Roma in Leskovac about the various services that the employment office can provide.

3. The Human Resources Center from Belgrade implemented the project “*Assistance to Self-assistance*” from September 2005 to September 2006.

This project deals with requirements needed to access the fundamental human to work. Full realization of this right is a necessary condition for a dignified life and for breaking the vicious cycle of poverty. The Human Resources Center wants to encourage people from the Roma community in the Municipality of Palilula to help them choose the way of development through their own engagement of employment and self-employment.

The main aim of the project is to encourage people of Roma nationality to overcome poverty through a more efficient use of working potentials, by stronger capacities for sustainable self-employment and by creating conditions for inclusion in legal market courses. The Human Resources Center chose a long-term strategy that would enable, after successful implementation and checking of access in the first stage, the development of continuous activity that would support members of the Roma community in three key moments one’s career:

- in the period of adolescence, when key gaps in education and future careers appear
- at the beginning of one’s career, i.e. at the moment of entering a specific form of earning a living
- at the beginning of regular business activities

Through lobbying activities Roma created inclusive business environment that would enable a more efficient legalization of Roma business.

There were 160 direct beneficiaries of this project.

4. The Association of Roma “New World.” from Belgrade implemented the project “*Education, Economic Empowerment and Training of Roma for Building Auto gas*” from March 2006 to September 2006.

The project is directed toward preparing Roma for employment, creating and improving of economic conditions. Most Roma live in Belgrade – 14,220 people in 154 settlements. According to the census from July 2005, there are 350 Roma households in 12 Roma settlements at the territory of New Belgrade. The average number of family members is 3 to 5, which means that more than 1,600 household members live in the Municipality of New Belgrade. About 62% of the Roma population is under the age of 25, which makes this population one of the youngest.

The project would provide support services and assistance for the training of young Roma (age 16 to 25) for the building and maintenance of gas devices for all types of vehicles. Project of this kind are a completely new form of activity in Serbia, as these are services that are expanding and are needed in the labor market. The project will enable young Roma to find jobs easily and quickly after they complete trainings, i.e. to help them enter into self-employment and to improve their work, thereby allowing them to actively participate in the life of local communities. Thus in the near future they will become specialists and perhaps launch their own business. This project will improve the (re) integration of target groups into society by preparing them for self-employment, employment and entrance to the labor market.

Participants will pass the training of the National Employment Service for “active job searching”. After the training is completed, 20 participants will get certificates for the completion of training for





serviceman of TNG factory, recognized in countries of the European Union.

5. The Association of Roma Students from Novi Sad implemented the project **“More Competent in the Labor Market – More Ready for Transition”**. It was carried out from March 2006 to September 2006. The project was aimed at preparing Roma for transitional changes and post-transition economic environment and making them more competent in the labor market. The project was realized in Novi Sad, focusing on the Roma settlements Bangladeš, Adice and Veliki Rit for the following target groups: Roma that collect secondary raw materials, market and street vendors, unemployed Roma (under the age of 35) with high school degree, possible Roma undertakers from Novi Sad, unemployed inhabitants from Roma settlements Bangladeš and Adice.

The project aim is to provide instruments and knowledge to the collectors of secondary raw materials from Novi Sad, helping them to prevent the exploitation of employees in this field and to create more favorable working conditions for themselves.

c) housing

An example of good practices exists in Kraljevo, where improving settlements and life conditions for inhabitants of informal Roma settlements is in progress. The General Plan for Kraljevo 2010 recognizes this location as a space intended for housing and represents initial activity in the process of legalizing Roma settlements. One such activity is the creation of first municipal housing strategies in the Republic of Serbia, which is based on a “Memorandum on Understanding”, signed between UN HABITAT and seven towns. It is performed with the support of the Italian Government through **“Housing Program and Permanent Integration of Refugees”**. This strategy treats solving the Roma issue in the Municipality of Kraljevo through yearly and five-year plans. Roma in the container-like settlement “Camp” are in the most difficult position. This settlement has existed since the end of 1990s, first as a refugee camp (tent settlement) for Roma evicted from Kosovo and Metohia. Then containers, funded by foreign donors, were placed at this location. The situation is now again alarming, as containers are completely dilapidated and not functional as housing.

The Municipality of Kraljevo, specifically the municipal housing agency, is the main stakeholder in this project. It will be implemented with the assistance of the Serbian Government, the Ministry of Capital Investments, the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights, the National Council of Roma National Minority, UN HABITAT and with the support of the Italian Government and other donors.⁵²

The second local initiative is **“Program for Improving Construction Land and Building within 2006 Financial Plan”** in Niš. This city has about 250,000 inhabitants, of which 25,000 are Roma (10%). The total budget for this program in 2006 was 1,028,114,361.68 dinars. The part of that budget intended for Roma was 1,050,000 dinars, or 0.1%. Further plans include the following: changing the system of social responsibility for the housing problem, creating national housing policy, establishing a local housing strategy in Niš, creating construction policy without discrimination, planning practical measures for the consolidation of Roma settlements at the local level, legalizing settlements, beginning public works in Roma settlements, and finding political solutions in the absence of legislation.⁵³

“Legalization of the Settlement Orlovsko” in Belgrade is the first legalization of a Roma settlement in Serbia. It is a unique case in that the inhabitants themselves launched the initiative for legalization of the settlement, and the City Hall in Belgrade accepted it.⁵⁴

The implementation of the project **“Infrastructure Equipment of Roma Settlements in the Municipality of Smederevo”** is now in progress. The Department for Building, Construction and Construction Land in Smederevo has launched activities for paving roads (3,000 meters) in settlements Mali Krivik and Ubilici. These activities are worth 1,800,000.00 dinars and are aimed at solving the problem of road infrastructure. The Municipality of Smederevo provided funding.

The Province Secretariat for Labor, Employment and Gender Equality, the Province Secretariat

52 Material of the conference “Consolidation and Legalization of Roma Settlements and Housing”, held on 20 and 21 November 2006

53 Speech given by Osman Baić at the conference “Consolidation and Legalization of Roma Settlements and Housing”, held on 20 and 21 November 2006

54 Tanasije Mirijevski, Association Rom, Belgrade, 14 November 2006

for Construction and Building, the Ecumene Humanitarian Organization from Novi Sad and the Municipality of Žitiste signed The Agreement on Settling Roma Settlement. Twenty-seven families live in this settlement. It is a positive example of dealing with housing problems of Roma. This is easier to do in small areas, as people know each other, so that there would be no problems proving who belongs to the Roma national minority.⁵⁵

d) healthcare

Local projects of the Ministry of Health of the Serbian Government:

1. *"First Step to Health"* – Medical Center, Aleksinac
2. *"Integration of Roma in Primary Healthcare System – Reproductive Health"* – Medical Center, Belgrade
3. *"Campaign Immunization of Roma Children in Belgrade during 2006"* – City Healthcare Institute, Belgrade
4. *"Personal and Social Responsibility: Importance of Reproductive Health of Roma Women"* – Medical Center, Belgrade
5. *"Improvement of Health of Young Roma"* – Medical Center, Voždovac
6. *"Together towards Health"* – Medical Center, Obrenovac
7. *"Healthy Children"* – Medical Center, Obrenovac
8. *"Together for a Healthy Community"* – Medical Center, Doljevac
9. *"Monitoring of Secondary Prevention of Coronary Disease in Roma Population"* – Medical Center, Indija
10. *"Raising the Level of Healthcare in Roma Population in the Village Strižil"* – Medical Center, Jagodina
11. *"Improvement of Roma's Health Condition at the Territory of Kikinda"* – Healthcare Institute, Kikinda
12. *"Prevention of Malignant Diseases of Women's Reproductive Organs"* – Healthcare Institute, Kragujevac
13. *"Heading toward Health" – Together for Health of Roma"* – Medical Center, Kragujevac
14. *"Prevention of Cardio-Vascular Diseases in Roma population"* – Medical Center, Kruševac
15. *"Improving Health of Roma That Collect Secondary Raw Materials"* – Institute for Protection of Workers' Health, Niš
16. *"Social Mobilization for the Immunization of Roma Population at the Territory of South Bačka District"* – Healthcare Institute, Novi Sad
17. *"For Better Quality Life for Roma"* – Medical Center, Niš
18. *"Insight into Health Condition the Roma Population in the Municipality of Opovo, with Plans for Activities for Improving the Health of the Roma Population in This Territory"* – Medical Center, Opovo
19. *"Detection, Treatment and Elimination of Helminates of Roma Children under 11 in Draginje and Brdarci"* – Healthcare Institute, Šabac
20. *"Observation of Persons without Health Insurance and Vaccination of Roma Children in Prokuplje"* – Medical Center, Prokuplje
21. *"Systematic Examination for Early Detection of Cervix Cancer for Roma Women (ages 18–65) in the Municipality of Bogatić"* – Medical Center, Bogatić
22. *"Improvement of Oral Health among Roma Children (ages 6 to 10) in Bogatić, Crna Bara, Badovinci, Klenj, Mačvanski Metković and Uzveće"* – Medical Center, Bogatić
23. *"Project for the Improvement of Roma Health"* – Medical Center, Smederevo
24. *"Improvement of the Health Situation in the Roma Population (ages 15 to 65) in the Municipality of Smederevska Palanka"* – Medical Center, Smederevska Palanka

⁵⁵ Stated at the meeting of the Employment Board, held on 15 December 2006; statement made by the representative of the Province Secretariat for Labor, Employment and Gender Equality





25. *“Improving Reproductive Health of Roma Women”* – Healthcare Institute, Sremska Mitrovica
26. *“We Support You”* – Medical Center, Sombor
27. *“Roma Have Hearts Too”* – Medical Center, Trstenik
28. *“Health Condition, Health Needs and the Use of Healthcare by the Roma Population in the Zlatibor District”* – Healthcare Institute, Užice
29. *“Improvement of Oral Health among Roma Children (ages 0 to 10) in the Municipality of Valjevo”* – Medical Center, Valjevo
30. *“Prevention of Cardio-Vascular Diseases of Roma”* – Medical Center, Velika Plana
31. *“Vaccination Status of Roma Children under 15 in the Municipality of Valjevo and its Improvement”* – Public Health Institute, Valjevo
32. *“Promotion of Compulsory Immunization Measures against Infectious Diseases of Roma Children in Bujanovac”* – Public Health Institute, Vranje
33. *“Preservation of Reproductive Health and Family Planning in Roma Population”* – Medical Center, Ada
34. *“I Have the Right to Know”* – Medical Center, Savski venac
35. *“Prevention of Cervix Cancer of Women (ages 18 to 55) in the Municipality of Ljubovija, with Roma women as a Target Group”* – Medical Center, Ljubovija
36. *“Prevention of Malignant Cervix Diseases of Roma Women”*, Medical Center, Velika Plana
37. *“Improvement and Protection of General Reproductive Health of Roma Women”* – Medical Center, Niš
38. *“Preventive Healthcare of Roma in Surdulica”* – Medical Center, Surdulica
39. *“Smile – Dentist Services for Roma Children”* – Medical Center, Trstenik
40. *“Medical Examination of Roma Population in the Municipality of Čuprija”* – Healthcare Institute, Čuprija
41. *“Knowledge and Health”* – Medical Center, Žitište
42. *“Decade of Roma – Early Detection of Cervix Cancer”* – Medical Center, Paraćin
43. *“PVU Screening of Malignancy of Roma Women”* – Medical Center, Kruševac

Healthcare projects supported by the Open Society Institute

“Development of a Common Strategy” – the project was implemented between 15 January 2006 and 15 January 2007. The project stakeholder is the women’s non-governmental organization “Bibija” from Belgrade. Its main aims are to establish mechanisms for better access to primary healthcare services for Roma women, to create partnerships with medical institutions of primary healthcare and to promote public health, human, minority and women rights. The primary target group is the group of Roma women that live in Roma settlements, of all ages and of various professions.

“The Improvement of Communal Hygiene in Two Settlements – Lebane and Bujanovac” – During 2007, the Roma organization YUROM Center from Niš will implement this project in Lebane and Bujanovac. This project will continue the process of improving Roma health in Serbia by addressing the main cause of the problem – bad life and housing conditions in the southern part of Serbia. For a decade state and local authorities have not taken any measures in order to create more humane conditions for the housing of Roma. The project will perform the analysis of health and epidemiological situation in Roma settlements. It will urge the public to demand from the authorities a reaction in the area of healthcare regarding people in Roma settlements. There will also be a local action plan for improving health and sanitary conditions in Roma settlements.

“Promoting Initiatives of Public Health through Building Capacities of the Roma Community and Public Medical Institutions” – implementation of this project began in the middle of September 2006. It is carried out by the non-governmental organization “Roma Children’s Center” from Belgrade and it will last until June 2007. The project refers to enlarging the participation of the Roma community in the initiative made by the Ministry of Health for the empowerment of Roma by taking long-term care about their own health. Activities in the Roma community will be focused on providing information about state initiative for promoting public health and for promoting active participation of the Roma

community in creating healthcare policy, directed toward the improvement of the healthcare status of the entire Roma community. Participants will have the chance to take part, through workshops, in creating new models of cooperation with public medical centers. The project will also establish partnership between Roma NGOs and medical centers that are included in the initiative, through the exchange of information and examples of good practices.

“Advocacy in the Achievement of the Right to Healthcare” – is the project that was performed by the Minority Rights Center from Belgrade during 2006. It will continue in 2007. It establishes a system of monitoring and lobbying for the implementation of the government’s action plan for healthcare for Roma. According to this action plan, the Minority Rights Center is in charge of monitoring. This project will also support the work of the Roma Rights Coalition, a group of non-governmental organizations that will monitor, with the help of the Roma Health Monitor, activities of state institutions and that will lobby for their implementation. The Minority Rights Center will publish reports within the quarterly newsletter “Decade of Roma”. There will also be a webpage on the Minority Rights Center website entitled Roma Rights Health Network, where information will be published regularly and where a forum will be established. Additionally, this project will develop a system of supporting socially imperiled Roma in the realization of the right to healthcare. Through the project “Roma Rights Health Network” the Minority Rights Center launched a fund that provides financial resources for: taxes for obtaining personal documents, traveling expenses for the purpose of obtaining personal documents, medical expenses for persons without documents (examinations and medicines). The Minority Rights Center will provide 3,000 USD through OSI support in 12 months. However, accounts for the needs of the Healthcare Assistance Program will be opened for other donors.

“Step by Step to Health” – the non-governmental organization “Little Prince” from Belgrade will perform this project from January through June 2007. Target groups include children, young people and women from marginalized groups. The project aims to improve the knowledge of this population about health and to inform them about health through workshops and distribution of a book that will be finished during the project. The primary target group consists of children that attend schools for adult education, “Braća Stamenković”. Children from other schools that will get the book from the area of healthcare will also be users. Workshops will cover various topics, such as human/children rights and the right to healthcare, healthy and risky ways of life, life without drugs, life without cigarettes, advances and importance of immunization, etc.

“Media as a Monitoring Instrument: Support of the Implementation of the Decade of Roma Inclusion, Initiative for Action Plans and Raising Awareness about Health Problems of Roma” – The main aim of the project are the sensitization of general public to the issue of Roma health and other problems, through specific goals such as increasing the inclusion of media scope for health problems of Roma and the Decade of Roma, through publishing information as specific instrument of monitoring state activities. Direct use will be directed toward media professionals and journalist that want to be more engaged in reporting the problems of Roma and on the development of the Decade of Roma. There will be round table discussions and the Media Center will take the opportunity to become a member of the Healthcare Board. The project will last from January to October 2007.

“Workshops on Health of Roma Women” is to be implemented by the organization “Women Space” in 2007, financially supported by the Open Society Institute. It is intended for the young Roma population, men and women ages 14 to 30. It is performed in 7 towns at the territory of South Serbia – Niš, Bela Palanka, Kruševac, Prokuplje, Leskovac, Vranje and Bujanovac. The aim of the project is to inform youth about women’s health and health in general, and to launch activism for rights of Roma women in the region. As most young Roma women and men get married at this young age, and age in line with the beginning of a woman’s reproductive period, we think it is important to inform them about relevant issues. In order to protect women, men also have to be protected and educated, as some of patriarchal patterns of behavior endanger the health of women, whether it take the form of a lack male participation in prevention of pregnancy, forbidding women to go to medical examinations, violent situations, etc. Working with men includes the issues of sexually transmissible diseases, family planning, women’s right to health and the protection of women’s health.





“*Action*” is a project with the specific goal of organizing and mobilizing health institutions to increase the scope of health protection for the Roma population in Leskovac during 2006/2007. “JAK-ER,” the center for education and health in Leskovac, is the planner and implementer of the project. During its implementation, the project plans to form healthcare teams to work with Roma health mediators. The presentation of the project will be organized in a preliminary stage of the project. Analysis of data on Hepatitis A risks factors, epidemiological conditions, ecological-hygienic supervision and the improvement of hygienic and sanitary status of the Roma settlements in Leskovac will be conducted in corporation with epidemiological service from the Public Health institution, Leskovac. Gynecology and Oncology preventative work will be conducted in the corporation with the Gynecology and Oncology hospitals from primary healthcare institution in Leskovac. There are plans to organize lessons “For Healthy Settlements” and workshops on the topic of the prevention of oncology disease.⁵⁶

ANNEX II

Conference “Consolidation and Legalization of Roma Settlements in Serbia”

The conference “Consolidation and Legalization of Roma Settlements and Housing” was held on 20 and 21 November 2006 in Belgrade. It was organized by the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights and the Ministry of Capital Investments, with the support of the OSCE Mission in Serbia, the Council of Europe and the Organization for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights.

Conclusions of the conference include the following:

1. Within the working group for the Action plan for housing for Roma, the Ministry of Capital Investments should form an expert group that directly engages in creating guidelines for the improvement and legalization of Roma settlements. This group should create the final document by 24 December 2006. Guidelines for the improvement and legalization of Roma settlements would become a legal act – instructions for taking measures aimed at the improvement and legalization of Roma settlements, which would be signed by the Minister of Capital Investments Velimir Ilić. The document would be created on the basis of the guidelines’ proposal, which was presented at the conference, and on the basis of suggestions and objections made at the same conference.
2. The government of Serbia should approve part of the budget for the Ministry of Capital Investments for the implementation of measures and activities from the Action plan for Roma housing, in accordance with the proposal that was created by the working group for the Action plan for Roma housing.
3. In compliance with the 2007 budget of the Ministry of Capital Investments, municipalities should create 20 construction plans for Roma settlements within the third goal of the Action plan for the housing of Roma – regulation of property status of housing units in Roma settlements.
4. In compliance with the 2007 budget of the Ministry of Capital Investments, the measure of building infrastructure and roads for 10 settlements should be taken. This is stipulated by the second goal of the Action plan for Roma housing of – overall and sustainable reconstruction and improvement of life in Roma settlements, which will be funded by the Ministry of Capital Investments and realized of municipalities.
5. In compliance with the 2007 budget of the Ministry of Capital Investments, municipalities and relevant institutions should take other measures stipulated the improvement of Roma settlements, according to the proposal that was created by the working group for the Action plan for housing of Roma.

⁵⁶ Material of the conference “Consolidation and Legalization of Roma Settlements and Housing”, held on 20 and 21 November 2006.

ANNEX III

Statistical Records about the Number of Roma in Serbia

Statistics obtained in the 2002 census are not considered a reliable indicator of the real number of Roma that live in Serbia. It should be taken into account that a large number of Roma avoid admitting their nationality because of existing prejudices and discrimination. According to secondary sources, there are 450,000 to 500,000 Roma people in Serbia. Roma are the largest national community in Serbia without Kosovo, right after Serbs.

Total	7,498,001	Roma	108,193
Serbs	6,212,838	Romanians	34,576
Montenegrians	69,049	Russians	2,588
Yugoslavs	80,721	Ruthenians	15,905
Albanians	61,647	Slovaks	59,021
Boosnians	136,087	Slovenians	5,104
Bulgarians	20,497	Ukranians	5,354
Bačka Croats	20,012	Croats	70,602
Vlachs	40,054	Czechs	2,211
Gorans	5,581	Other	11,711
Hungarians	293,299	Undeclared	107,732
Macedonians	25,847	Regional members	11,485
Muslims	19,503	Unknown	75,483
Germans	3,901		



