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**EVALUATION REPORT**



**TRANSTEC**  
PROJECT  
MANAGEMENT

**UDF-REU-07-189 - Empowerment of Roma to Fight Rights Deprivation**

**Date: 16 August 2011**



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## **Disclaimer**

The views expressed in this report are those of the evaluators. They do not represent those of UNDEF, or of any of the individuals or institutions referred to in the report.

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## I. Executive Summary

### (i) *The Project*

This report concerns the evaluation of the project entitled “*Empowerment of Roma to Fight Rights Deprivation*” implemented by the European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC), based in Budapest, from September 1, 2008 to January 31, 2011, in Albania, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Slovakia and Romania. The project had a total budget of US\$375,000. The duration of the project was extended by four months from the original end date of August 31, 2010 – with the agreement of UNDEF.

The Roma are the most discriminated-against and marginalized group in the European countries within which they live, inside and outside the European Community, and including the six countries named above. The project sought to support and empower grassroots Romani organizations in six countries in Central and Southern Europe to advocate effectively on laws, policies and practices to combat racial discrimination, and to promote the application of international human rights standards concerning housing in national legislation.

The project’s primary audience or beneficiary group was young Romani activists in the six participating countries. There were two principal streams of support for young Romani activists:

a) **Anti-discrimination advocacy** and,

b) **Housing rights** (documentation and monitoring of abuse of housing rights).

A secondary target audience consisted of policy-makers – government officials and parliamentarians - with the aim to strengthen working relationships and enhance communications between Romani civil society representatives and those within government engaged in the policy process.

Indirectly, the project hoped to bring benefits to the Roma population of participating countries. By providing support to the development of the capacity of Roma activists and the organizations they worked for in advocacy and advocacy-related research, it sought to increase the participation of Roma in the democratic process. Finally, in a third, and somewhat different, stream of project work, by identifying test cases addressing discrimination to bring to court under c) the Strategic Litigation component, the ERRC aimed to make the Roma populations of the six participating countries aware of the possibilities of using legal means to challenge abuse of their rights.

### (ii) *Assessment of the project*

**Relevance:** The project addressed a number of important issues in the sphere of human rights and democratic participation, central to UNDEF’s mandate. Most fundamentally, it responded to the unmet need of Roma communities in the participating countries for recognition of their needs and for practical public initiatives dedicated to providing for them. By focusing on the themes of anti-discrimination laws and housing and shelter rights, it emphasized particular spheres where action was urgently required. It also pointed to the ineffectiveness of the states and their agencies in the six target countries in acting in defense of the basic rights of the Romani people.

Second, by focusing on Roma youth and young activists, it sought to address in a practical way the weakness of Roma civil society organizations in undertaking advocacy on behalf of their own people. Roma organizations are mainly small, local in focus, and lacking regular funding, facilities and paid staff. There have been few opportunities for Roma NGO representatives to benefit from systematic training on rights issues of urgent concern to their communities.

Finally, there is a yawning gap between promise and performance on the part of states, inside and outside the European Community, in tackling deprivation and denial of Roma rights. Such concerns receive minimal attention in the domestic political process. In this regard, strategic litigation represents an important mechanism through which a marginalized group may seek recognition of its rights in the court, along with a remedy for the specific grievances and denial of rights which form the basis for a case. The purpose of the litigation component of the project was to demonstrate to the Roma people the viability of taking legal action as a means through which the state might be held accountable for its failure to uphold their rights.

In summary, the project is seen as highly relevant to UNDEF's priorities. It organized concrete action to contribute to building the capacity of Roma civil society to address through the political and legal systems the social, economic and political exclusion of what has been described as Europe's largest and most neglected minority.

**Effectiveness:** The project met the test of effectiveness by completing all activities, excluding the litigation process, within the set timeframe (extended by four months). The ability of ERRC and its staff to ensure that work was completed as planned is impressive, and the project was managed in a highly professional way. The effort to link strategic litigation - a major and relatively expensive component of the project - with the advocacy-related housing research component proved to be a challenge. The kind of research required for documentation of systematic denial and/or non-recognition of the right to adequate and secure housing proved to be different in kind, and requiring a different approach, from that which would identify potential litigation cases. Further the timetable for litigation and the legal process was out-of-step with the constraints of a two-year project. Nevertheless, despite these limitations, the project was generally effective in achieving the results it had targeted.

**Efficiency:** The project was managed in such a way as to ensure that resources were allocated efficiently in ensuring that outputs were achieved. Staff proved particularly effective in their ability to adapt and do whatever was required to ensure that the project reached its destination. Given the stretching of project funds over a number of components and six countries, this meant, at times, that management efforts were concentrated in those places where they were most needed. At times, for example in the lack of hands-on support available to the more competent housing researchers, there are signs that particular components were under-budgeted. This appeared to be largely a result of the need to find funds for both strategic litigation and capacity development.

The budget seems to have been managed with care. It may be that the concentration of budget expenditures within the framework of a more focused project would have brought benefits in terms of impact. As it was, project management seems to have performed well in producing a long list of deliverables with the funds available.

**Impact:** The project was the vehicle for introducing and testing a new methodology for ERRC in the sphere of international advocacy, while maintaining its established role in strategic litigation. Certainly, the project made a difference in both these spheres of engagement. Its longer-term impact is harder to assess, as is the case in most human rights projects, where change is often the result of a combination of events and actions, legal changes and court judgments, along with a process of an attitudinal shift on the part of decision-makers, opinion-leaders, the mass media and the public-at-large. Despite the complexity of change, it may be said that the UNDEF project made a contribution to this multi-faceted process.

Overall, the project has taken some worthwhile and imaginative steps in furthering the objective of increased participation of Roma in democratic governance in the six targeted countries. Yet, while this was a large project for UNDEF, the scale of the problem of marginalization of the

Roma is so large that an initiative of this kind must be understood as merely a first step in this direction.

**Sustainability:** Following the conclusion of the project, the grantee has worked with national partners to seek additional funding to continue the advocacy campaigning undertaken during the project. Thus far it has been unsuccessful. Using existing funds, it is continuing to support the litigation cases launched during the projects. It has also recruited several of the young Romani activists supported during the project as country monitors on a range of Roma human rights issues, employing the methodology tested during the housing rights component of the project. It is not clear how long ERRC will be able to continue with this initiative, which provides part-time employment for those recruited. As to broader sustainability of the results obtained through the project, given the absence of official support for litigation, and very limited assistance available to strengthening Roma civil society organizations, much will depend on securing additional donor support to build on what has been accomplished.

A gap in the project was the short-term nature of support at national level to build on the excellent initial training, provided at regional level. This should be seen as a lesson for a further phase of work in this sphere, rather than as a criticism of a first effort to use modest funds (component budgets) to link regional and national levels of activity. Future work will be well-advised to focus on a broader group of civil society activists, with most support delivered at national level, and where the focus is on Roma NGOs, as much as on individuals, so that there is more prospect of retention of skills and knowledge acquired.

**UNDEF and Added Value:** By supporting ERRC in the project, UNDEF was providing resources to an under-funded area and supporting the effort to facilitate the democratic inclusion of a highly-marginalized minority group. The project was a very close fit with UNDEF priorities concerning minorities. This was one of UNDEF's larger projects, and there was a strong justification for the scale of investment in this initiative. Projects of this kind deserve the attention of UNDEF, since they tend not to fit with the priorities of most other donor organizations.

ERRC is a regional organization with visibility and credibility, and one whose mission dedicates it to enhancing Roma rights. While it is not a Roma organization, it has strong connections to Roma and broader civil society networks in all countries of Eastern, Central and South-East Europe (as well as in Western Europe). UNDEF funding facilitated its presence in national advocacy campaigning. This gave the campaigns added credibility and enhanced Roma access to policy-makers. Similarly, the ERRC's name on the housing rights report, one of the major deliverables, ensured greater attention to its findings and recommendations by the mass media, public officials and the donor community, than had it been published by a national NGO or NGO coalition.

More generally, there is a tendency for the needs of Roma, whether in terms of the basics of daily life or of political representation, to fall between the cracks of both state provision and donor funding allocations. Hence there is a substantial and continuing need for external support to Roma civil society and those with a track record in supporting Roma socio-economic and political inclusion. UNDEF funds are of particular value in this regard, since they are not tied to diplomatic priorities and calculations, and because they focus on, among other things, support to marginalized minorities.

### **(iii) Conclusions**

In terms of the quality of professional and technical support provided by ERRC:

- ***The inputs provided in the litigation field, in the identification and selection of cases, and advice in their preparation, were of the highest quality.***

ERRC has a previous track record in undertaking strategic litigation cases across Europe, and the project benefited greatly from the application of its experience and expertise.

- ***All cases selected were initiated at country level. Accordingly, the strategy adopted, whereby ERRC cooperated with national human rights NGOs, such as the Centre for Minority Rights in Serbia, and, through its partner, recruiting a local lawyer with appropriate commitment and expertise, proved to be a sound one.***

The contribution of ERRC was crucial, in that, for the most part, local lawyers lacked the necessary experience in the application of international legal instruments and anti-discrimination legislation to take on such cases without the professional support of ERRC.

- ***The quality of work in the development and delivery of a relevant and appropriate training curriculum, and in the delivery of the training modules, was of a high order.***

The concept of ERRC accompaniment of the trainees in practical application and elaboration of what had been learned represented an important departure from the short-term training, which is often a feature of human rights projects. However, it is apparent that more personnel and resources were required to make this aspect of individual capacity development fully effective.

More broadly:

- ***The project performed an important role in exposing young activists to cooperation with national-level NGOs and preparing them for advocacy meetings and dialogue with senior officials. It also engaged them in the planning of significant advocacy events.***

- ***The housing rights research produced a high-quality report, widely-distributed and well-received.***

This reflected well on the competence of the selected trainees in this field and their accomplishments

- ***The project did not have any formal partners.***

However, it cooperated with national NGOs and smaller Roma NGOs in the advocacy campaigns. Further, it cooperated with national NGOs with a commitment to Roma rights in strategic litigation. One probable weakness of the project was its focus on young, individual activists as the primary “unit” for capacity development, rather than focusing on Roma NGOs first, and young activists working with them, secondly. Such an approach would have increased the probability of the organization retaining the benefits of the capacity development support provided.

- ***The project achieved all of the proposed outputs, and contributed to all of the expected results.***

#### **(iv) Recommendations**

- ***ERRC is to be encouraged to continue its work in supporting Roma civil society in Central, Eastern and SE Europe, and civil society more generally, enabling it to assert the priorities of Roma communities in the political process, locally, nationally and at European level.***

It is hoped that ERRC will seek funds to continue its work in this regard, taking into account lessons learned.

- ***The value of recruiting and training local Roma researchers or monitors was one of the lessons learned from the project. It is recommended that ERRC seeks the funding to enable it to continue with this feature of its work, which links it more closely to the experience of Roma communities.***
- ***It is further recommended that ERRC continues to support capacity development of Roma civil society, but that it focuses in future primarily on Roma organizations, rather than merely on a small number of individual trainees.***
- ***It is recommended that, in future, and if feasible, an effort be made to fund litigation and advocacy/research separately.***

It proved difficult to combine litigation and advocacy in one project. In principle, both are needed and are mutually supportive. In practice, the difficulty of predicting the timetable for, and duration of, the legal process, makes it hard to fit the litigation process into the parameters of a conventional project.

- ***For the future, it is recommended that in preparing funding submissions, ERRC ensures that adequate resources are allocated to each project component, even though this may lead to difficult choices and the elimination of some elements of the original plan.***

There was a lack of continuity and follow-up in some areas of project work, most notably anti-discrimination advocacy. This suggests that the project tried to include too many elements within a single project with limited resources.

- ***It is recommended that UNDEF considers projects which support the democratic inclusion of Roma in public life in Europe as a high priority.***

## II. Introduction and Development Context

### **(i) Project and Evaluation Objective**

This report is the evaluation of the project entitled “*Empowerment of Roma to Fight Rights Deprivation*” implemented by the European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC), based in Budapest, from September 1, 2008 to January 31, 2011; in Albania, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Slovakia and Romania. The project had a total budget of US\$375,000. The duration of the project was extended by four months from the original end date of August 31, 2010 – with the agreement of UNDEF.

UNDEF and Transtec have agreed on a framework governing the evaluation process, set out in the Operational Manual. According to the manual, the objective of the evaluation is to: “*undertake in-depth analysis of UNDEF-funded projects to gain a better understanding of what constitutes a successful project which will in turn help UNDEF devise future project strategies. Evaluations also assist stakeholders to determine whether projects have been implemented in accordance with the project document and whether anticipated project outputs have been achieved.*”

### **(ii) Evaluation Methodology**

The evaluation was conducted by two experts, one international and one national, under the terms of a framework agreement between UNDEF and Transtec. The methodology of the evaluation is set out in the Operational Manual governing this framework agreement, as well as in the evaluation Launch Note. A set of project documents was provided to the evaluators in the weeks preceding the field mission. On that basis, they prepared the Launch Note (UDF-REU-07-189) setting out key issues and particular areas of focus, to be considered during the field mission, which took place from May 16-20, 2011. Additional documents were obtained from ERRC and other relevant sources (see list of documents consulted in Annex 3).

The field mission included one full day with ERRC in Budapest, and four days in Serbia, one of the key countries for project implementation. While in Serbia, the team visited Nis in the south, Novi Sad and Sabac, both in Vojvodina, as well as Belgrade. The schedule included visits to Roma settlements, formal and informal, with direct relevance to project activities. Meetings, semi-structured interviews and informal discussions were held with a number of project stakeholders in the various locations (see list of interviewees in Annex 3). Those met included:

- Management and staff of ERRC (Budapest);
- Serbian Roma Trainees of project activities in housing rights and advocacy on anti-discrimination;
- Representatives of ROMA NGOs in Serbia who cooperated with the project;
- ERRC’s partner organization in Serbia in strategic litigation, and the principal lawyer involved in key cases in Serbia;
- The Commissioner on Equality and other representatives of the Government of Serbia; and,
- Residents of Roma settlements;

### **(iii) Development Context**

The project sought to support and empower grassroots Romani organizations in six countries in Central and Southern Europe to advocate effectively on laws, policies and practices to combat racial discrimination, and to promote the application of international human rights standards concerning housing in national legislation. In this section, the report considers the current

situation of the Roma populations of Europe, and, more specifically, of the six countries included in the project: Albania, Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia and Slovakia. All six countries have significant Roma populations.

▪ **General Background: Roma in Europe**

As official study after official study has confirmed, the Roma are the most discriminated-against and marginalized group in the European countries within which they live, inside and outside the European Community, and including the six countries included in the UNDEF-supported project with ERRC. Among the most visible manifestations of Roma exclusion is the lack of security in housing, which has resulted in the forced eviction of large numbers of people, while, at the same time, measures to provide legal protection against forced evictions have been continually eroded.

In the year 2000, the European Council adopted an Official Directive on “Implementing the Principle of Equal Treatment between Persons Irrespective of Racial or Ethnic Origin”. EU member-states, including Romania and Slovakia, were required to translate the directive into their domestic legal framework. EU candidate states, including the other four participating countries, were required to adopt the same course of action as a condition for joining the organization. Despite this and other measures, the performance of most European countries in acting effectively to address the systematic exclusion and marginalization of Roma populations has been weak.

While most, though not all, Roma are formally citizens of their countries of residence or birth, many are not able to enjoy full citizenship rights. This is often through the failure of the authorities to provide them with official documents, such as birth certificates, without which access to basic services may be denied. Countries such as France, Greece, Italy and Spain do not recognize the Roma as an ethnic minority; Roma citizens originating in other EU states are often treated as foreigners, subject to deportation. In Germany, most Roma are classified as refugees, limiting their rights. In the countries participating in the project, a further problem, which limits the capacity of states to



**A forced eviction of a Roma family in**

formulate effective policies and programs to address the social exclusion of Roma populations, is the absence of adequate or up-to-date information for Roma on key social indicators, such as infant mortality or primary school completion rates.

While Roma in Eastern and Central Europe and the former Yugoslavia cannot look back to a golden age under communism, they did at least enjoy greater security, employment, and more assured provision by the state for their basic needs. The breakup of the former regimes and the advent of democracy and the free market have not been kind to Roma, and they frequently fall between the cracks of social policy, being denied access to basic services, or being diverted into parallel systems, particularly in housing and education. Referring to Roma citizens of the EU, a recent report produced by the Commission indicates that they face “deep and intractable social problems, related to low levels of education, high unemployment, inadequate housing,

poor health, and wide-ranging discrimination, all of which are inter-related and create a vicious circle of social exclusion from which it is difficult to extract themselves on their own.” The report goes on to note that “in some areas of Eastern and Central Europe, mortality rates are significantly higher and life expectancy rates much lower than the EU average.”

- ***The Situation in the Six Project Countries***

**Albania:** The Romani population in Albania is recognized as an ethno-linguistic minority by the country’s constitution. Official numbers of the Roma population are not available and figures given are quite unreliable, with estimates given for the total population ranging from an obviously low 10,000 to as many as 150,000. A 2006 report by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) in Albania labels the Roma as “the poorest and the most marginalized ethnic group in Albania” and reports that the level of poverty among the group is up to two times higher than for the general population.<sup>1</sup> The World Bank reports similar findings estimating that 75 percent of Roma families are “very poor”. Statistics also show higher illiteracy rates and lower levels of educational achievement for the Roma compared to the rest of the population.<sup>2</sup> The Roma additionally suffer from discrimination, diminishing the prospects of success in the labor market. The 2005 UNDP survey, quoted in the 2006 report, cited above, found that 72 percent of the Roma population earns its income through self-employment, usually the sale of used clothes, music performances or recycling of scrap metal, casual work such as in construction, and by owning small businesses.

**Macedonia:** According to the 2002 census, 2.7 percent of the Macedonian population is of Romani decent. The Roma Education Fund (REF), supported by the Open Society Institute and the World Bank, however, states that the Roma population more realistically makes up five to six percent of the population. The suburb of Suto Orizari, on the outskirts of Macedonia’s capital, Skopje, with a population of 20,000 – 30,000, is said to be the largest and the only self-governed Roma community in the world. The Roma in Macedonia enjoy greater representation in local and national government than in neighboring countries. REF claims that the situation of the Roma has improved in recent years in Macedonia, particularly in the field of education. The government introduced policies, such as affirmative action policies, that benefit Roma students. However, civil society surveys conducted in 2008 to monitor the progress of the Macedonian government with its Decade of Roma (2005-15) commitment found that “the Republic of Macedonia does not dedicate sufficient attention to the implementation of Roma-targeted policies.”<sup>3</sup>

Many of the Roma still live in extreme poverty and inadequate housing and living conditions. According to REF data for 2007, 89 per cent of the Romani population in Macedonia lives below the poverty line, which is nearly three times higher than the national poverty rate. In addition, REF reports indicate that the unemployment rate amongst Roma is 70 per cent, which is double the national rate of 35 per cent. In the area of education, REF data show that, of the 96 per cent of Romani children who enroll in primary school, approximately 25 per cent drop out by the fifth grade, while nearly half of all Romani students fail to complete the full cycle of primary

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<sup>1</sup> United Nations Development Programme, 2006: [At Risk: The Social Vulnerability of Roma in Albania](#).

<sup>2</sup> Sources cited in: ERRC, “Roma and Egyptians in Albania: From Social Exclusion to Social Inclusion: Summary of the World Bank Needs Assessment Study on Roma and Egyptians in Albania”, July 21, 2005.

<sup>3</sup> Bojadzieva, Aleksandra. 2008. MK Decade Watch 2008: Roma Activists Assess the Progress of the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015. See also: ERRC Report on Macedonia for the 2010 EU Progress Reports.

education. Of the 12.8 per cent of Romani primary school graduates who continue onto secondary education, approximately 44 per cent drop out before completing their studies and only 0.3% of Roma enroll in tertiary education.

**Montenegro:** While numbers for the total Roma population are debatable, as is the case in many European countries with a Roma minority, the census of 2003 counted slightly fewer than 3,000 people of Romani descent in Montenegro, which accounts for only a 0.4 percent of the total population.<sup>4</sup> The Roma are often grouped together with two other minorities in Montenegro, the Ashkaelia and Egyptians, under the acronym RAE. UNDP reports indicate that a large portion of this community is made up of displaced persons from Kosovo, who are often unfamiliar with the local language UNDP reports that the “RAE community in Montenegro is characterized by highest poverty and unemployment rates compared to other groups in the society. They typically live in ethnically homogeneous areas, illegally built at the outskirts of cities.” The UNDP report also notes that only 10 per cent of RAE adults had completed primary school, and only 38 per cent of children attend primary school.<sup>5</sup>

**Romania:** As of 2005, the official count of the number of Roma in Romania was 535,140. However, unofficial estimates report a substantially higher number of 1.5 million, representing 6.8 percent of the population of Romania. The Open Society Institute reports that only 19.7 percent of Roma in Romania complete primary education, consequently leading to a greater unemployment rate among the Roma than the overall population. According to the 2009 European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey conducted by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 25 percent of the Roma participants interviewed in Romania reported having experienced discrimination. The figure for Romania was far lower than for its neighbors such as Bulgaria, Slovakia, Czech Republic and Hungary. However, despite such findings, the Roma are often described as the most disadvantaged minority in Romania. Emigration of Romania’s Roma toward Western Europe, particularly Spain and Italy, was a strong trend in the last decade.

**Serbia:** Officially, the Roma population in Serbia makes up 1.4 percent of the total population. As in much of the region, most Roma citizens live in secluded, self-contained neighborhoods. Only an estimated one third of them live in ethnically diverse neighborhoods and even fewer (5.9 percent) live in neighborhoods that are largely non-Roma. According to a 2008 survey, an overwhelming 87.1 percent of Roma women and 77.2 percent of Roma men in Serbia have only completed primary school, or have even lower levels of educational achievement.<sup>6</sup> Among survey respondents, 52.1 percent were unemployed, and among those employed, the most common source of income, for one third of the total, comes from temporary jobs. Monthly average earnings for half of the Roma families are dramatically lower than the average salary in Serbia. As of 2008, more than half of respondents, around 60 percent, didn’t see that their situation had improved in recent years. Those that report an improvement see education as the field where most progress has been made. However, any improvement in this regard should be seen against the background of continuing marginalization and segregation.<sup>7</sup> According to research completed in 2010 by the Open Society Institute, Some 30 per cent of Roma children in Serbia are in “special education” facilities, while it is clear that most do not belong there.

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<sup>4</sup> United Nations Development Programme, Country Office Montenegro, 2006: At Risk: The Social Vulnerability of Roma, Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons in Montenegro

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> Zdenka Milivojevic.. “Decade and Position of Roma in Serbia Project: 10000 Roma Families in Serbia Know About the Decade of Roma”, Roma Center for Democracy (Belgrade), October 2008.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

**Slovakia:** After the Hungarians, the Roma are the second largest minority group in Slovakia. Census data states that 1.7 percent of the Slovak population of about 5.5 million is Roma. The Roma Education Fund (REF), however, estimates that Roma constitute some ten percent of the Slovak population. The REF reports that about one quarter of Roma lives in extremely poor, isolated settlements plagued by “high levels of unemployment, poor housing conditions, and lack of access to basic public services.” Roma youth are also underrepresented in secondary schools and higher education.<sup>8</sup> Data from 2001 Statistical Office Census provides a pessimistic view of the current education attainment of the Romani people in Slovakia: approximately 80 percent of Roma women and 74.1 percent of men end their education with primary school, or have even lower levels of educational attainment.



**Children at an informal settlement below a bridge in New Belgrade, where families are threatened with eviction**

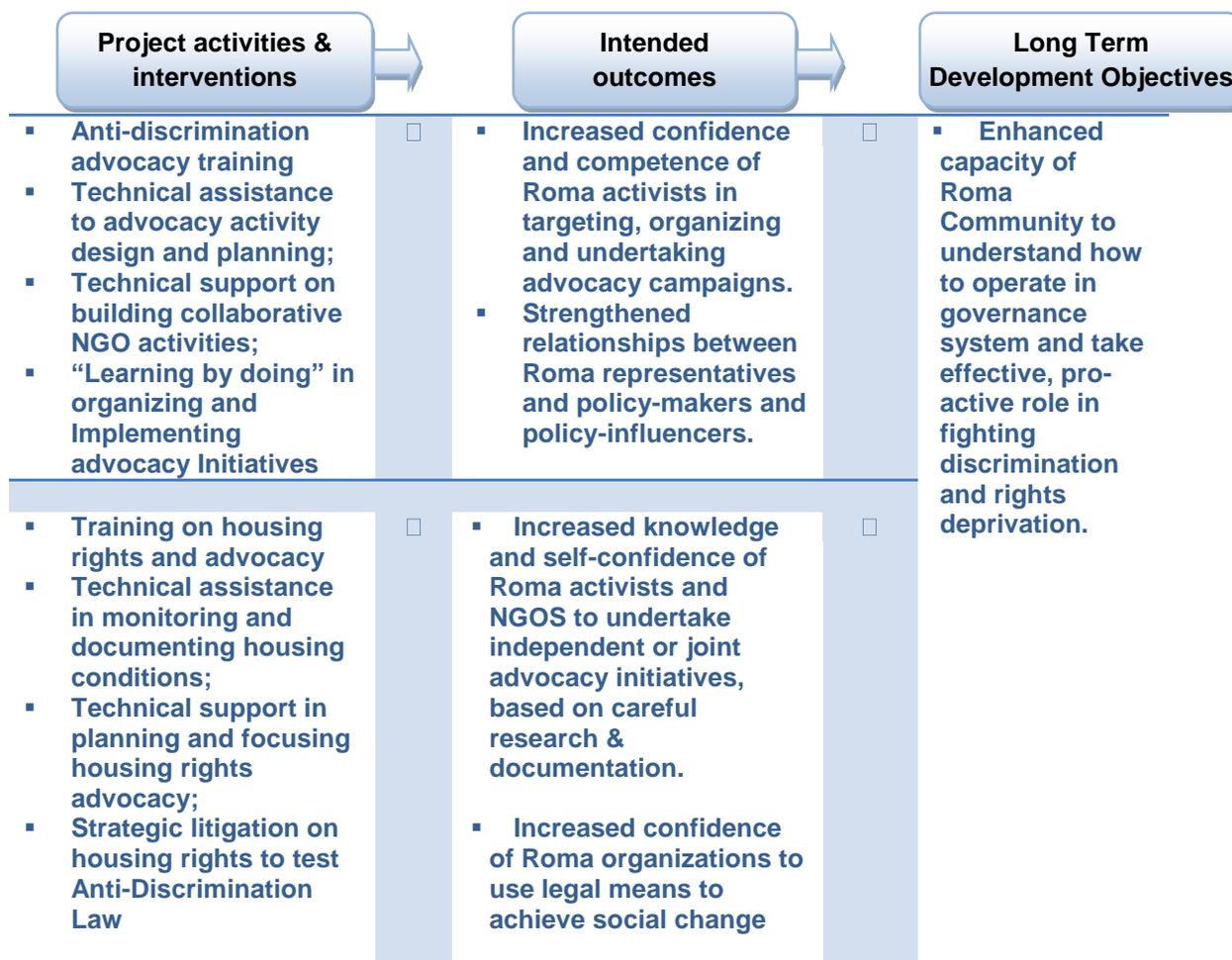
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<sup>8</sup> Roma Education Fund, 2007: “Advancing Education of Roma in Slovakia,” Country Assessment and the Roma Education Fund's Strategic Directions.

### III. Project objectives, Strategy, and Implementation

#### (i) Logical framework

The logical impact diagram that follows is based on the project logic as set out in the project document.



#### (ii) Audience and project approach

The project’s primary audience or beneficiary group was young Romani activists in the six participating countries. A secondary target audience consisted of policy-makers – government officials and parliamentarians – with the aim to strengthen working relationships and enhance communications between Romani civil society representatives and those within government engaged in the policy process.

Indirectly, the project hoped to bring benefits to the Roma population of participating countries. By providing support to the development of the capacity of Roma activists and the organizations they worked for in advocacy and advocacy-related research, it sought to increase the participation of Roma in the democratic process. Finally, by identifying test cases addressing discrimination to bring to court under the Strategic Litigation component, ERRC aimed to make

the Roma populations of the six participating countries aware of the possibilities of using legal means to challenge abuse of their rights.

The principal activities implemented by the project to provide support to the audiences described above were as follows:

First, there were two principal streams of support for young Romani activists:

- a) Anti-discrimination advocacy; and,
- b) Housing rights (documentation and monitoring of abuse of housing rights).

Under Stream a, the key activities were:

- Development and delivery of a training curriculum for 14 trainees concerning advocacy on the adoption and/or implementation of anti-discrimination legislation, following the EU framework law. For this project component, trainees were drawn from only four of the six project countries (Albania, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia). The 5-day training workshop was held in Podgorica, Montenegro, in February 2009. The trainees were exposed to the main elements of regional and international anti-discrimination law, as well as the fundamentals of organizing and conducting a targeted advocacy campaign, focusing on equality and social justice for Roma within the trainees' countries of residence.
- Translation of the curriculum and trainee manual into several languages, and provision of simultaneous translation in these same languages at the training workshop.
- Development by the trainees of plans for advocacy campaigns. On the basis of the quality of plans received and performance in the workshop, a number of trainees would be selected to put their plans – modified on the basis of advice from ERRC – into effect.
- Technical support to assist the trainees to develop an implementation strategy and put it into practice. Accompaniment of trainees in initial meetings to meet with government officials and parliamentarians to discuss key issues concerning Anti-Discrimination Laws (ADLs); introduction of each trainee to an in-country NGO to provide support and advice; working with each trainee to prepare high-level advocacy letters to go to national and international bodies.
- Technical and financial assistance to enable each trainee, working with an in-country partner NGO, to cooperate with other civil society and government organizations in planning and holding a national event on ADL.

For Stream b, the major steps in support were as follows:

- Development and delivery of a training curriculum for 14 trainees concerning Housing Rights Advocacy. Participants from all six project countries took part, along with additional participants from Bosnia-Herzegovina, funded from another source. A 4-day workshop was held, also in Podgorica, in April, 2009. The aim of the training was to contribute to the capacity of young Romani human rights activists to utilize domestic, regional and international human rights mechanisms to advance the housing rights of Romani communities. In addition, the workshop provided guidance on the methodology for conducting a coherent monitoring and reporting campaign.
- Development of a detailed monitoring plan for housing rights documentation, to be implemented over a 12-month period, leading to the publication of a major report on Roma housing rights. Preparation of a detailed guide for field research, along with a reporting template.
- Five of the trainees were contracted in their individual capacities, and two organizations agreed to host researchers, to conduct the housing research in close collaboration with ERRC and its research coordinator.
- Ongoing technical support (“participant evaluation”) to the researchers, who spent the first two months immersing themselves in relevant documentation, before beginning field research. Each researcher made two field visits per month, and produced a monthly plan and report.

- Preparation of the Housing Rights study, based on the inputs from the researchers, supplemented from other sources, as required.
- Launch of the report at a public event and press conference in Belgrade attended by all researchers. Printing and distribution of 1,000 copies.

Much of the project's efforts focused on these two streams of activity and the building of the capacity of young Roma activists. In addition, there was one third area of focus, and a set of activities designed to contribute to the broader impact of the two stream of work, and to engage with the other audiences described above.

The third area of focus was strategic litigation. The plan was to draw on the housing rights research and to identify two key cases for litigation in each of the six project countries. ERRC provided the support of its lawyers in reviewing potential cases and preparing case files. It also worked with local NGO partners, engaged in legal aid or litigation in support of Roma communities, in building trust with the Roma families and individuals willing to pursue legal action, and in recruiting local lawyers in taking the cases to court. ERRC covered all legal costs. In addition, ERRC worked with Roma and other national NGOs in organizing advocacy work relating to both ADL and housing rights. This work would broaden the base of involvement of Roma and national civil society groups in the campaigns and ensure greater visibility for the work, while also building closer engagement with government officials and parliamentarians. This would assist the project in its objective of building closer relations between Roma representatives and officialdom.

### ***(iii) Strategic aspects***

The project strategy aimed to address a major gap in the capacities of representatives of Roma people in selected countries of Central and SE Europe to undertake advocacy on behalf of their communities on major issues concerning their basic rights and living conditions. The absence of effective advocacy organizations led by, or involving, Roma representatives, is quite striking for all the countries included in the project. ERRC devised an imaginative approach to strengthening the capacities of Roma civil society by focusing on young activists. It also sought to follow up initial training with practical experience, which in turn contributed to ensuring that Roma voices were heard on some key rights issues.

As was explained in the meetings between the Evaluation Team and ERRC in Budapest, for the organization, the project represented something of a departure from its normal practice. Like other international advocacy groups in the human rights sphere, conventionally, ERRC would do its work in-country by sending out its own staff for a period of intensive field work. The new approach involved working as closely as possible with community-level activists and supporting them in doing much of the field research. Implementation meant that everyone concerned found himself or herself encountering a steep learning curve. The effort in the project was to pilot this new approach, while also enabling ERRC to continue in its focal role as a public interest law organization in pursuing strategic litigation.

A major risk associated with the overall strategy was the decision to focus on training only one or two individuals from each of the six participating countries (four countries, in the case of anti-discrimination), and then, for the most part, to follow up with only one of the individuals in each country. This meant that much depended on the effectiveness and dedication of a very small number of young activists. Although links were established with Roma and broader, human rights NGOs, the project's capacity development efforts were focused on the selected individuals, and not on building the capacity of Roma civil society organizations. This reduced the likelihood of retention of the skills, knowledge and experience acquired through the project by Roma civil society.

The distribution of project resources across six countries was a reasonable approach for a regional organization. However, this resulted in a limitation on the amount of assistance and the

duration of support the project could provide to implementing its capacity development strategy in each country.

The effort to link strategic litigation - a major and relatively expensive component of the project with the advocacy-related housing research – would prove to be a challenge. The kind of research required for documentation of systematic denial and/or non-recognition of the right to adequate and secure housing proved to be different in kind, requiring a different approach from that which would identify potential litigation cases. Further the timetable for litigation and the legal process was out-of-step with the constraints of a two-year project.

Perhaps, then, the effort to combine strategic litigation with advocacy and capacity development activities was a little over-ambitious, as was the effort to implement the project on such a broad, geographic front. At the same time, ERRC developed mechanisms to cope with at least some of the risks and ensure that project outputs were achieved, and, in every case, the investment in the enhancement of the effectiveness of young Roma activists represented a worthwhile effort. As to litigation, it is what ERRC does best. There is a critical shortage of funds for such work (to be discussed below), and if Roma rights are to be defended effectively, there is no substitute for this aspect of human rights defence.

## **IV. Evaluation Question Answers / Findings**

The evaluation is based on a set of evaluation questions or EQs, designed to cover the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability; plus the issue of UNDEF value added. The Evaluation Questions and related sub-questions are presented in Annex 1.

### ***(i) Relevance***

The project addressed a number of important needs in the sphere of human rights and democratic participation, central to UNDEF's mandate. Most fundamentally, it responded to the unmet need of Roma communities in the participating countries for recognition of their needs and for practical public initiatives dedicated to providing for them. By focusing on the themes of anti-discrimination laws and housing and shelter rights, it emphasized particular spheres where action was urgently required. It also pointed to the ineffectiveness of the states and their agencies in the six target countries in acting in defense of the basic rights of the Romani people. Second, by focusing on Roma youth and young activists, it sought to address in a practical way the weakness of Roma civil society organizations in undertaking advocacy on behalf of their own people. Roma organizations are mainly small, local in focus, and lacking regular funding, facilities and paid staff. There have been few opportunities for Roma NGO representatives to benefit from systematic training on rights issues of urgent concern to their communities. In this respect, the project was seeking to make a contribution to filling an important need.

Thirdly, it is apparent that there is a serious gap in the understanding of government personnel and parliamentarians – as with the general public and mass media – concerning the factors underlying the marginalization of the Roma population. This goes along with an apparent disregard of the poor fit between state social policies and programs and the needs of Roma communities and families. The feature of both the anti-discrimination and housing rights streams of activity to enhance cooperation with public officials and improve their understanding of

current problems and the abuse of the basic rights of Roma represented an effort to close this gap and strengthen communications between Roma activists and public officials.

Finally, there is a yawning gap between promise and performance on the part of states, inside and outside the European Community in tackling deprivation and denial of Roma rights. Such concerns receive minimal attention in the domestic political process. In this regard, strategic litigation represents an important mechanism through which a marginalized group may seek recognition of its rights in the court, along with a remedy for the specific grievances and denial of rights which form the basis for a case. The purpose of the litigation component of the project was to demonstrate to the Roma people the viability of taking legal action as a means through which the state, at national and/or local level, might be held accountable for its failure to uphold their rights.

In summary, the project is seen as highly relevant to UNDEF's priorities. It organized concrete action to contribute to building the capacity of Roma civil society to address through the political and legal systems the social, economic and political exclusion of what has been described as Europe's largest and most neglected minority. It focused on empowerment of young Roma activists by equipping them with practical skills and experience, thus enabling them – and, through them, their communities – to engage with and participate in the democratic process. Through the focused campaigns, publications and litigation it supported, the project enabled Roma civil society to demonstrate that they could make a difference.

### **(ii) Effectiveness**

The project met the test of effectiveness by completing all activities, excluding the litigation process, within the set timeframe (extended by four months). While some questions may be asked about project strategy (as noted above), the ability of ERRC and its staff to ensure that work was completed as planned is impressive, and the project was managed in a highly professional way.

Identification and selection of the trainees, for both anti-discrimination and housing, proved extremely challenging. With some exceptions, young Roma activists – unlike their counterparts in “mainstream” civil society – are not so well-connected to organizational and electronic networks, and, thus, are harder to reach. Further, despite the fact that those selected were more experienced or had higher levels of educational attainment than had been intended in the project plan, most had little or no experience of participating in workshops and formal training. A majority had only the most limited familiarity with legal texts and the international and European human rights conventions. Most had limited experience of research and organizing advocacy work.

The training curriculum and the trainers employed received very positive reviews from trainees. The workshops were seen as relevant, thorough and as pitched at the right level for the participants. The lead trainer for the anti-discrimination workshop, who was of Black British background, was particularly well-regarded. He was able to draw on the experience of the Black community in Britain and elsewhere in a way that the trainees found highly pertinent to their situation, informing their understanding of what might be possible for their own communities.

In the end, despite difficulties experienced with the performance of some of the trainees, the expected outputs were achieved. With the support of local NGOs, replacement Romani personnel were identified where required. In four countries, with the support of local NGOs, trainees took part in the analysis of draft anti-discrimination laws. Further, joint public meetings were held with representatives of state institutions, parliamentarians, and Roma and other NGOs. In addition, two substantial advocacy letters were sent, under the signature of ERRC and a national NGO, to the highest authorities in Serbia and Macedonia.

In the research for the housing rights component, 450 complete and satisfactory interviews were completed with Roma informants. These provided the foundation for the production of a major

report on the Roma and housing rights, *Standards Do Not Apply: Inadequate Housing in Roma Communities*, published by ERRC. The report is well-researched and professionally-produced. It has been widely distributed (one thousand hard copies, along with downloads from the ERRC website). It is of interest to note that the report includes an annex, where the Romani researchers who took part in the work leading up to the production of the document reflect on their experience in the project and on how they believe it will assist them in the future.

The launch meeting for the report in Belgrade was well-supported by Serbian state institutions, notably the Ministry of Minorities and Human Rights (subsequently incorporated into the renamed Ministry of Local Self-Governance and Human Rights), and the newly-established Commission for Equality, with the Commissioner in attendance. It also attracted substantial mass media coverage, including television interviews with some of the researchers. In addition to the report, the research led to the preparation and submission of eight separate advocacy letters to international bodies, and five advocacy letters submitted to national governments.



**Housing conditions in a Roma settlement in Nis threatened with eviction. The settlement was a site for interviews for the housing rights research.**

In the sphere of litigation, eleven strategic litigation cases have been developed in five of the countries targeted in the project. Thus far, six legal submissions have been produced (as of the delivery of the Final Report of January 31, 2011).

### **(iii) Efficiency**

There is no doubt that the project was managed in such a way as to ensure that resources were allocated in an efficient way to ensure that outputs were achieved. Staff proved particularly effective in their ability to adapt and do whatever was required to ensure that the project reached its destination. Given the stretching of project funds over a number of components and six countries, this meant, at times, that management efforts were concentrated in those places where they were most needed. At times, for example in the lack of hands-on support available to the more competent housing researchers, there are signs that particular components were

under-budgeted. This appeared to be largely a result of the need to find funds for both strategic litigation and capacity development.

In the sphere of strategic litigation, the timetable for the emergence of appropriate cases and for carrying them forward through the legal process was beyond the control of project management. Overall, ERRC did a good job in managing the litigation component and keeping the cost to the project of a more expensive component (as a result of legal fees) within reasonable limits. The approach adopted in Serbia seems to have been a sound and efficient one. This involved working with a national NGO with experience of providing legal aid to the Roma community, and jointly reviewing and selecting cases, working with a local lawyer, with sound knowledge of domestic legislation, as well as of relevant human rights and international human rights law.



**The eviction of a family in Belgrade: with the support of ERRC and the Minority Rights Centre, the family has launched a case against the responsible authorities.**

The budget seems to have been managed with care. As was suggested above, it may be that the concentration of budget expenditures within the framework of a more focused project would have brought benefits in terms of impact. As it was, project management seems to have performed well in producing a long list of deliverables with the funds available.

One comment might be made on budget organization. While, for the most part, the presentation and association of funds with specific project components is clear, this is less true for strategic litigation. There is a separate section of the budget for this theme, but, in fact, much of the preparatory work is funded from other budget lines, where litigation-related work is bundled with advocacy. It is not in any way suggested that this approach represented a deliberate effort by ERRC to obscure the reader's understanding of budget allocations. However, if possible, it would be advisable in future for ERRC to provide a clearer statement of the actual budget for each project component

#### **(iv) Impact**

As was noted in the discussion of Project Strategy above, the project was the vehicle for introducing and testing a new methodology for ERRC in the sphere of international advocacy, while maintaining its established role in strategic litigation. Certainly, the project made a difference in both these spheres of engagement. Its longer-term impact is harder to assess, as is the case in most human rights projects, where change is often the result of a combination of events and actions, legal changes and court judgments, along with a process of an attitudinal shift on the part of decision-makers, opinion-leaders, the mass media and the public-at-large. The UNDEF project made a contribution to this process.

In terms of more immediate results, the following observations may be made:

- A number of young Romani activists do have increased capabilities, along with practical experience, in lobbying and advocacy campaigns;
- A small group also learned through training and practical application the necessary skills to undertake systematic, guided research, working with a rigorous methodology, along with report-writing and communications skills;
- In addition, the project pioneered an approach to issue-based research and documentation, whereby young Roma activists were supported in conducting field research, the findings of which formed the basis for major, evidence-based advocacy campaigns. Through trial-and-error, a new approach has been formulated, which should provide a model for ongoing work by ERRC and others in building Roma capacities.
- The project also contributed to improving communications and working relationships between Roma civil society organizations and public officials;
- At one level, the strategic litigation (still in process) is making a modest contribution in demonstrating to Roma that they can use the legal process to challenge discrimination. However, the scattering of legal cases across six countries has reduced impact of this kind.
- At the same time, the dogged pursuit of litigation by ERRC and its national partners is making an impact on the courts (and on the political system) in the countries of the region in forcing their attention to the systematic abuse or denial of the rights of Roma by states which are members of, or candidates for membership of, the European Union.

Overall, the project has taken some worthwhile and imaginative steps in furthering the objective of increased participation of Roma in democratic governance in the six targeted countries. Yet, while this was a large project for UNDEF, the scale of the problem of marginalization of the Roma is so large that an initiative of this kind must be understood as merely a first step in this direction.

#### **(v) Sustainability**

Following the conclusion of the project, the grantee has worked with national partners to seek additional funding to continue the advocacy campaigning undertaken during the project. Thus far it has been unsuccessful. Using existing funds, it is continuing to support the litigation cases launched during the projects. It has also recruited several of the young Romani activists supported during the project as country monitors on a range of Roma human rights issues, employing the methodology tested during the housing rights component of the project. It is not clear how long ERRC will be able to continue with this initiative, which provides part-time employment for those recruited.

As to broader sustainability of the results obtained through the project, much depends on the availability of funds to ERRC and others to continue the work of building the capacity of Roma civil society and of Roma activists more broadly, since it will be critical to ensure that Roma voices are heard *within* other civil society groups, and not merely in Roma-only groups. From a sustainability perspective, such efforts in the future will require the establishment of on-going

national-level support to support the building of Roma capacities to play a role in the public realm.

A gap in the project was the short-term nature of support at national level to build on the excellent initial training, provided at regional level. This should be seen as a lesson for a further phase of work in this sphere, rather than as a criticism of a first effort to use modest funds (component budgets) to link regional and national levels of activity. Future work will be well-advised to focus on a broader group of civil society activists, with most support delivered at national level, and where the focus is on Roma NGOs as much as on individuals, so that there is more prospect of retention of skills and knowledge acquired.

Given the dispersal of its funds across several components and the limited time span of the project, it was not possible to build a more direct linkage between litigation and advocacy. As ERRC has shown in its long-term engagement with issues - such as segregation of Roma schoolchildren in the Czech Republic - for litigation to be a catalyst for social change, it will be necessary to link court judgments with a sustained campaign, directed both at high-level decision-makers on a European and national level, and at opinion-leaders, the mass media, public officials at national and local level, and the public at large. This is the route to sustaining the benefits of strategic court judgments. Such a linkage cannot easily be established and activated within a two-year project, but a beginning could be made.

#### ***(vi) UNDEF value added***

As noted earlier, the project was a clear fit with UNDEF priorities. The systematic exclusion of the Roma from access to public services and economic opportunities, brought about by combination of deliberate state action, neglect and widespread prejudice, is quite apparent in all six states involved in the project.

In countries which, directly or indirectly, fall into the sphere of influence of the European Union, it appears to be increasingly difficult for advocacy and public interest law agencies to secure funding from official European sources, since there is a reluctance to fund activities where the grantee may engage in court actions and campaigning, both of which are directed at government. The flexibility of UNDEF in its willingness to support the kinds of activities undertaken by ERRC, particularly the litigation work, is highly appreciated by the grantee and its national partners.

UNDEF support has been helpful to ERRC and national partners in seeking further financial support, enhancing the reputation of the organization. Efforts are continuing, in collaboration with national partners, to secure other funds to build on the experience of the project.

## V. Conclusions

The conclusions presented here represent a synthesis of the answers to Evaluation Questions given in the previous section.

### **(i) Project Strategy and Management**

The project sought to address a major gap concerning the social and political exclusion of Roma and Roma priorities from the governance process in the six countries where activities were implemented. It is understandable for a regional organization to adopt a multi-country approach. Given the similarities in the situation facing Roma across the six countries featured in the project, there were also benefits to be obtained from cross-country comparisons in both anti-discrimination advocacy and housing rights. At the same time, the spreading of limited project resources across so broad a geographic span, while also attempting to combine support to litigation alongside capacity-building in advocacy and issues-based research, resulted in a shortage of funds in some areas of activity. Nevertheless, the project was generally effective in achieving the results it had targeted.

The project was managed in a highly professional way, and budget resources were deployed with care and attention to detail.

### **(ii) The Substantive Work of the Project and Technical Support**

- The inputs provided by ERRC in the litigation field, and in the identification, selection, and advice in preparation of, cases were of the highest quality. ERRC has a previous track record in undertaking strategic litigation cases across Europe, and the project benefited greatly from the application of its experience and expertise. For the most part, local lawyers lacked the necessary experience in the application of international legal instruments and anti-discrimination legislation to take on such cases without the professional support of ERRC.



**A family in Sabac, Serbia, whose case claiming wrongful eviction and demolition of their home has been taken up by ERRC.**

- All cases selected were initiated at country level. Accordingly, the strategy adopted, whereby ERRC cooperated with national human rights NGOs, such as the Centre for Minority Rights in Serbia, and, through its partner, recruiting a local lawyer with appropriate commitment and expertise, proved to be a sound one.
- The quality of work in the development, and delivery of a relevant and appropriate training curriculum and the delivery of the training modules, was of a high order.
- The concept of ERRC accompaniment of the trainees in practical application and elaboration of what had been learned represented an important departure from the short-term training which is often a feature of human rights projects. However, it is apparent that more personnel and resources were required to make this aspect of individual capacity development fully effective.
- The project performed an important role in exposing young activists to cooperation with national-level NGOs and preparing them for advocacy meetings and dialogue with senior officials. It also engaged them in the planning of significant advocacy events.
- The housing rights research produced a high-quality report, widely-distributed and well-received. This reflected well on the competence of the selected trainees in this field and their accomplishments.
- The project did not have any formal partners. However, it cooperated with national NGOs and smaller Roma NGOs in the advocacy campaigns. Further, it cooperated with national NGOs with a commitment to Roma rights in strategic litigation. One probable weakness of the project was its focus on young, individual activists as the primary “unit” for capacity development, rather than focusing on Roma NGOs first, and young activists working with them, secondly. Such an approach would have increased the probability of the organization retaining the benefits of the capacity development support provided.
- The project achieved all of the proposed outputs, and contributed to all of the expected results. As to longer-term impact, given the absence of official support for litigation, and very limited assistance available to strengthening Roma civil society organizations, much will depend on securing additional donor support to build on what has been accomplished in the project.

### ***(iii) UNDEF and Added Value***

By supporting ERRC in the project, UNDEF was providing resources to an under-funded area and supporting the effort to facilitate the democratic inclusion of a highly-marginalized minority group. The project was a very close fit with UNDEF priorities concerning minorities. This was one of UNDEF’s larger projects, and there was a strong justification for the scale of investment in this initiative.

Projects of this kind deserve the attention of UNDEF, since they tend not to fit with the priorities of most other donor organizations. Given the weakness of Roma civil society and the difficulty most (though not all) Roma NGOs experience in obtaining funds, UNDEF would be well-advised to consider making exceptions to its policy of not renewing funding for grantees.

## VI. Recommendations

(i) ERRC is undertaking vital work in representing the interests of Roma communities. **It is to be encouraged to continue its work in supporting Roma civil society in Central, Eastern and SE Europe, and civil society more generally**, enabling it to assert the priorities of Roma communities in the political process, locally, nationally and at European level. It is understood that ERRC is seeking financial support from a variety of donor sources to enable it to continue its work in this regard, taking into account lessons learned from this project.

(ii) **One of the lessons learned concerned the value of recruiting and training local Roma researchers or monitors** as key participants in project work. It is recommended that ERRC seeks the funding to enable it to continue with this feature of its work, which links it more closely to the experience of Roma communities.

(iii) It is further recommended that ERRC continues its efforts to support capacity development of Roma civil society. Based on the experience of the project, **it is recommended that, in doing so, it focuses in future primarily on Roma organizations, rather than merely on a small number of individual trainees**. This should increase the probabilities of the organizations retaining the benefits obtained from the support provided.

(iv) **It is also recommended that, in future, more attention be given by ERRC to providing adequate support at national level within the structure of a regional project**. This may require reducing the number of participating countries.

(v) One of the challenges faced by the project was the need to bring together litigation and advocacy in one project. In principle, both are needed and are mutually supportive. However, in practice, this proved to be problematic. The difficulty of predicting the timetable for, and duration of, the legal process, makes it hard to fit the litigation process into the parameters of a conventional project. Accordingly, **it is recommended that, in future, and if feasible, an effort be made to fund litigation and advocacy/research separately**. It is recognized that it is not easy to secure funds for litigation activities.

(vi) It was noted in the report that the project attempted to take on a number of complex and demanding initiatives simultaneously with limited human and financial resources. As a consequence, there was a lack of continuity and follow-up in some areas of project work, most notably anti-discrimination advocacy, where activities came to an abrupt halt at the point where further work was called for to reinforce the learning that had taken place. For the future, **it is recommended that in preparing funding submissions, ERRC ensure that adequate resources are allocated to each project component, although this may lead to difficult choices and the elimination of some elements of the original plan**.

(vii) The project highlighted a set of unmet needs concerning a significant minority which is suffering the consequences of social and political exclusion. Accordingly, ***it is recommended that UNDEF give priority consideration to projects which support the democratic inclusion of Roma in public life in Europe.***

## VII. Overall Assessment and Closing Thoughts

ERRC is a regional organization with visibility and credibility, and one whose mission dedicates it to enhancing Roma rights. While it is not a Roma organization, it has strong connections to Roma and broader civil society networks in all countries of Eastern, Central and South-East Europe (as well as in Western Europe). UNDEF funding facilitated its presence in national advocacy campaigning. This gave the campaigns added credibility and enhanced Roma access to policy-makers. Similarly, the ERRC name on the housing rights report ensured greater attention to its findings and recommendations by the mass media, public officials and the donor community than had it been published by a national NGO or NGO coalition.

The involvement of ERRC as a partner in the strategic litigation cases was crucial, since few national organizations have the necessary combination of litigation expertise and understanding of critical rights issues facing Roma communities, families and individuals. In Serbia, the national partner in this aspect of the work, the Centre for Minority Rights, has experience in providing legal aid to Roma in need, but no experience in litigation per se.

More generally, there is a tendency for the needs of Roma, whether in terms of the basics of daily life or of political representation, to fall between the cracks of both state provision and donor funding allocations. Hence there is a substantial and continuing need for external support to Roma civil society and those with a track record in supporting Roma socio-economic and political inclusion. UNDEF funds are of particular value in this regard, since they are not tied to diplomatic priorities and calculations, and because they focus on, among other things, support to marginalized minorities.

ROMA NGOs, a key focus for the project, have a particularly difficult time in securing donor interest and support. This is mainly because such organizations tend to be small, weak and lack the infrastructure and credibility to meet donor funding criteria (the Soros Foundation and its Open Society Institute, through the *Roma Initiatives Program*, are a partial exception to this pattern). By funding a regional organization, with the capability to utilize and manage the funds, UNDEF was able to bring benefits to Roma civil society, which might not have been available through other channels.

## VIII. Limitations and Constraints

This was a regional project, with various activities of the project taking place in six countries, not including the base country of ERRC, Hungary. Given the limitations of time and budget, it was agreed with the Evaluation Manager that the field research would focus on visits to ERRC in

Budapest and Serbia only. Accordingly, it was not possible to examine at first hand the work of the project in the other five countries where activities took place. The project had broad scope and a long list of activities. This made it difficult to assess progress against a baseline, for reasons discussed in the report. Even in Serbia, much of the work undertaken was innovative, taking place in areas of great need and very limited alternative support. In most cases, activities represented a beginning, where it is hoped other funding will become available in the future, building on the start made here.

## IX. Annexes

### Annex 1: Evaluation Questions

DAC criterion	Evaluation Question	Related sub-questions
Relevance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To what extent was the project, as designed and implemented, suited to context and needs at the beneficiary, local, and national levels?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Were the objectives of the project in line with the needs and priorities for democratic development, given the context?</li> <li>Should another project strategy have been preferred rather than the one implemented to better reflect those needs, priorities, and context? Why?</li> <li>Were risks appropriately identified by the projects? How appropriate are/were the strategies developed to deal with identified risks? Was the project overly risk-averse?</li> </ul>
Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To what extent was the project, as implemented, able to achieve objectives and goals?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To what extent have the project's objectives been reached?</li> <li>To what extent was the project implemented as envisaged by the project document? If not, why not?</li> <li>Were the project activities adequate to make progress towards the project objectives?</li> <li>What has the project achieved? Where it failed to meet the outputs identified in the project document, why was this?</li> </ul>
Efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To what extent was there a reasonable relationship between resources expended and project impacts?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Was there a reasonable relationship between project inputs and project outputs?</li> <li>Did institutional arrangements promote cost-effectiveness and accountability?</li> <li>Was the budget designed, and then implemented, in a way that enabled the project to meet its objectives?</li> </ul>
Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To what extent has the project put in place processes and procedures supporting the role of civil society in contributing to democratization, or to direct promotion of democracy?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To what extent has/have the realization of the project objective(s) and project outcomes had an impact on the specific problem the project aimed to address?</li> <li>Have the targeted beneficiaries experienced tangible impacts? Which were positive; which were negative?</li> <li>To what extent has the project caused changes and effects, positive and negative, foreseen and unforeseen, on democratization?</li> <li>Is the project likely to have a catalytic effect? How? Why? Examples?</li> </ul>
Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To what extent has the project, as designed and implemented, created what is likely to be a continuing impetus towards democratic development?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To what extent has the project established processes and systems that are likely to support continued impact? Are the involved parties willing and able to continue the project activities on their own (where applicable)?</li> </ul>
UNDEF value added	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To what extent was UNDEF able to take advantage of its unique position and comparative advantage to achieve results that could not have been achieved had support come from other donors?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What was UNDEF able to accomplish, through the project, that could not as well have been achieved by alternative projects, other donors, or other stakeholders (Government, NGOs, etc).</li> <li>Did project design and implementing modalities exploit UNDEF's comparative advantage in the form of an explicit mandate to focus on democratization issues?</li> </ul>

## Annex 2: Documents Reviewed

### Formal Project Documents

- UR-REU-07-189 Project document, August 14, 2008
- UR-REU-07-189 Mid-term Report, October 1, 2009
- UR-REU-07-189 Final Narrative Report, January 31, 2011

### Housing Rights

- Housing Rights Research: General Guidelines for Country Researchers (Annex to MTR)
- Detailed Research Guidelines and Interview Guide (Annex to MTR)
- Examples of Housing Rights Monthly Reports by Country Researchers
- List of Participants in Housing Workshop, Podgorica, Montenegro, April 26-30, 2009
- Letter from ERRC and Regional Centre for Minorities (Belgrade) to the Prime Minister and senior officials of the Government of Serbia and the municipalities of Belgrade and New Belgrade concerning Forced Evictions of Romani Community in Belgrade (not dated)
- *“Standards Do Not Apply: Inadequate Housing in Romani Communities,”* Report by the ERRC, December 2010.

### Anti-Discrimination

- Application Form
- Training Curriculum and Schedule, and Training Materials
- List of participants in Anti-Discrimination Workshop, Podgorica, Montenegro, February 23-27, 2009
- Letter from ERRC and National Roma Centrum (Kumanovo, Macedonia) to the President, Prime Minister and senior officials of the Republic of Macedonia regarding Draft of the Law on Prevention and Protection against Discrimination (not dated)
- Listing of Relevant Press Clippings

### ERRC Background Documents Consulted

- *“Implementation of Judgments,”* Roma Rights (Journal of ERRC), number 1, 2010.
- *“Summary of ERRC’s Concerns Relevant for the European Commission’s 2009 Progress Reports,”* June 8, 2009.
- ERRC Progress Reports 2010.
- *“Roma and Egyptians in Albania: From Social Exclusion to Social Inclusion: Summary of the World Bank Needs Assessment Study on Roma and Egyptians in Albania,”* July 21, 2005.

### Background Reference Documents

- *“Measures to Promote the Situation of Roma EU Citizens in the European Union,”* European Parliament, Directorate General for Internal Policies, Policy Department C: Citizens’ Rights and Constitutional Affairs, PE 432.747, 2011.
- *“No Data, No Progress: Data Collection in Countries Participating in the Decade of Roma Inclusion,”* NY and Budapest, Open Society Foundations (Soros), Roma Initiatives, June 2010.
- Roma Education Fund. 2007. *“Advancing Education of Roma in Slovakia,”* Country Assessment and the Roma Education Fund's Strategic Directions.
- United Nations Development Programme, Country Office Albania, 2006: *“At Risk: The Social Vulnerability of Roma in Albania.”*
- United Nations Development Programme, Country Office Montenegro, 2006: *“At Risk: The Social Vulnerability of Roma, Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons in Montenegro”*
- Bojadzieva, Aleksandra. 2008. MK Decade Watch 2008: *“Roma Activists Assess the Progress of the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015.”*

## Annex 3: Persons Interviewed

### **European Roma Rights Centre, Budapest**

Robert Cushen, Executive Director (by telephone)  
Tara Bernard, Director of Programs  
Djordje Jovanovic, Research Coordinator  
Idaver Memedov, Lawyer  
Victoria Vasey, Lawyer

### **Serbia**

#### ***Nis***

Marija Demic, housing rights Trainee and researcher  
Dejan Bajramovic and Kenan Rasitovich, participants in Belgrade Anti-Discrimination Workshop  
Visit to Roma Settlement (with Marija Demic)

#### ***Novi Sad***

Dejan Dimitrov, advocacy trainee and consultant  
Aleksandar Jovanovic, Voyvodina Roma Centre for Democracy (informal ERRC partner in project and follow-up)

#### ***Sabac***

Visit to Roma Settlement (with ERRC representative) and meeting with Roma family whose case is being taken up in litigation by ERRC

#### ***Belgrade***

Nevana Petrusic, Commissioner for Protection of Equality, Government of Serbia  
Tanja Rankovic, Advisor in the Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister for European Integration  
Andrea Colak, Director, Minority Rights Centre, and Aleksandar Olenik, Lawyer  
Petar Antic, former Deputy Minister of Human and Minority Rights  
Jovana Vukovic and Borka Vasic, Regional Minority Centre  
Visit to Belvil Roma Settlement (with Regional Minority Centre)

## Annex 4: List of Acronyms

ERRC	European Roma Rights Centre
EU	European Union
NGO	Non-Government Organization
OSI	Open Society Institute
REF	Roma Education Fund
UNDEF	United Nations Democracy Fund
UNDP	United Nations Development Program