

Mandate of the Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, and on the right to non-discrimination in this context

Inputs for the Questionnaire on informal settlements and human rights

Experience in projects and programmes related to informal settlements, resettlements and good practices (contribution to the questions 7 and 8 from the Questionnaire).

7. Please provide, if applicable, information on international development assistance received for projects and programmes related to informal settlements. To what extent are these projects implemented within a human rights framework and linked to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda targets?

8. Please provide information about successful upgrading or resettlement projects or experiences that could provide good practices elsewhere. Please also share lessons learned from unsuccessful projects or approaches.

LET'S BUILD A HOME TOGETHER PROJECTS¹

The first phase of the “Livelihood Enhancement for the Most Vulnerable Roma Families in Belgrade” (Let’s Build a Home Together) Project, funded by the European Union (EU) with 3.6 million Euros, started in 2013 and ended in 2016. The Project improved living conditions of 110 Roma families with 512 members, (245 female and 267 male), who had previously lived in informal settlements in the City of Belgrade, by providing durable and sustainable housing solutions and supporting the beneficiaries’ inclusion process.

The United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), in partnership with the City of Belgrade and the United Nations Office of High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), implemented the Project.

Three social housing buildings with 59 social apartments were constructed and equipped in Belgrade, ten families were supported in reconstruction of their own property, while 41 village houses were purchased. All families received a basic set of household appliances (stove, washing machine and refrigerator), while families in the village houses and those who reconstructed own houses were provided with tools and machines for income generation.

All social housing units are owned by the City of Belgrade, and managed by the Secretariat for Social Welfare, which signed the tenancy contracts with the Project beneficiaries. Two models of housing were used: social housing and social housing in the protected environment, depending on the level of families’ social vulnerability. The social housing in protected environment, as a new model of the social housing for Roma population, was introduced through the Project for the first time in the system of the social protection in the City of Belgrade, thus making an important contribution to further initiatives in this area.

The Project was designed and implemented fully in line with the international human rights laws and the UN standards of the right to adequate standards of living. Furthermore, the Project tested three possible housing models (social and village housing, and support for the reconstruction of own property), established resettlement procedures and processes and developed and set the standards that could be used as a model for future support to Roma families and replicated throughout the country.

¹ <http://www.sagradimodom.org/>

At the policy level, the Project contributed to improving Roma housing model through development and implementation of four methodologies: Methodology for Consultation Process with Beneficiary Families, Criteria for Evaluation of Social Housing Locations, Methodology for Village Housing and Methodology for Host Community Consultations.

Although a pilot initiative, this project established positive examples and good practices of communication and consultation with affected vulnerable communities. The City of Belgrade was supported in applying the principles of the good governance and its technical/staffing capacities were improved, while the lessons learned in this process provide good guidance for the design of any similar intervention.

Currently, as on-going and complementary initiative, UNOPS is implementing the second phase of the LBHT Project, funded by the European Union with 1.5 million Euros. The Project is implemented by UNOPS, in partnership with the City of Belgrade and in coordination with the Ministry of European Integration of the Government of the Republic of Serbia, the Office for Human and Minority Rights, the Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit, as well as the National Minority Council of the Roma National Minority.

Taking into account the lessons learned and best practises in the project's first phase, and applying the developed and tested methodologies, this project is providing the housing for 44 Roma beneficiary families living in the container settlements in the City of Belgrade.

Until April 2018, 12 families with 76 family members (38 female and 38 male) have been resettled to village houses, while another 12 will acquire this housing format by the end of the Project lasting until February 2019. By that time, one social housing building with 22 apartments in Belgrade, to accommodate the same number of families, will be constructed.

Both the first and the second phase of the Project are aligned with the City of Belgrade Action Plan for the Resettlement of the Residents of Newly Formed Settlements Makiš, Resnik, Jabučki Rit and Kijevo (RAP).

Roma men, women and children actively participated throughout the projects implementation, in consultations related to preferable housing options and social housing locations, in defining the conceptual design of the accommodation, in designing the rules of the distribution of accommodation, and in definition of the rules of co-habitation in the social housing buildings.

Gender equality has been addressed within both projects, and women have been encouraged to take an active part in each step of implementation, particularly in decision making.

EUROPEAN PROGRES PROGRAMME²

Following adoption of the Strategy for Social Inclusion of Roma 2016-2025 by the Government of Serbia, the European PROGRES Programme designed an intervention to empower Roma CSOs to pilot certain measures identified in the Strategy, pertained to employment, housing, education, safety, social and health protection. Sixteen Roma-founded CSOs implemented the projects that benefited 3,634 persons, while at the same time significantly improving project management capacity and fund-raising capacity of these organisations. The activity was implemented from September 2016 until May 2017 with EUR 151,000.

One of these projects was implemented by the CSO "Merhamet Sandžak" from Novi Pazar which implementation improved living conditions for the Roma residents in the settlement Blaževo (30 IDP Roma families - 178 persons) through several sanitary, hygienic and medical actions:

² <http://www.europeanprogres.org/>

- Cleaning of the illegal garbage dump conducted, new containers provided as well as regular service of cleaning and waste removal and water supply arranged with the Public Company “Čistoća”
- Suppressed epidemic of infectious skin disease scabies through systematic medical treatment along with disinfecting and fumigation of houses in cooperation with the Institute for Public Health

Sustainability prospects are provided with the signed Protocols of Cooperation with above mentioned national stakeholders that envisages regular and permanent provision of services to Roma population in the settlement Blaževo regardless of the project duration.