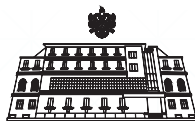




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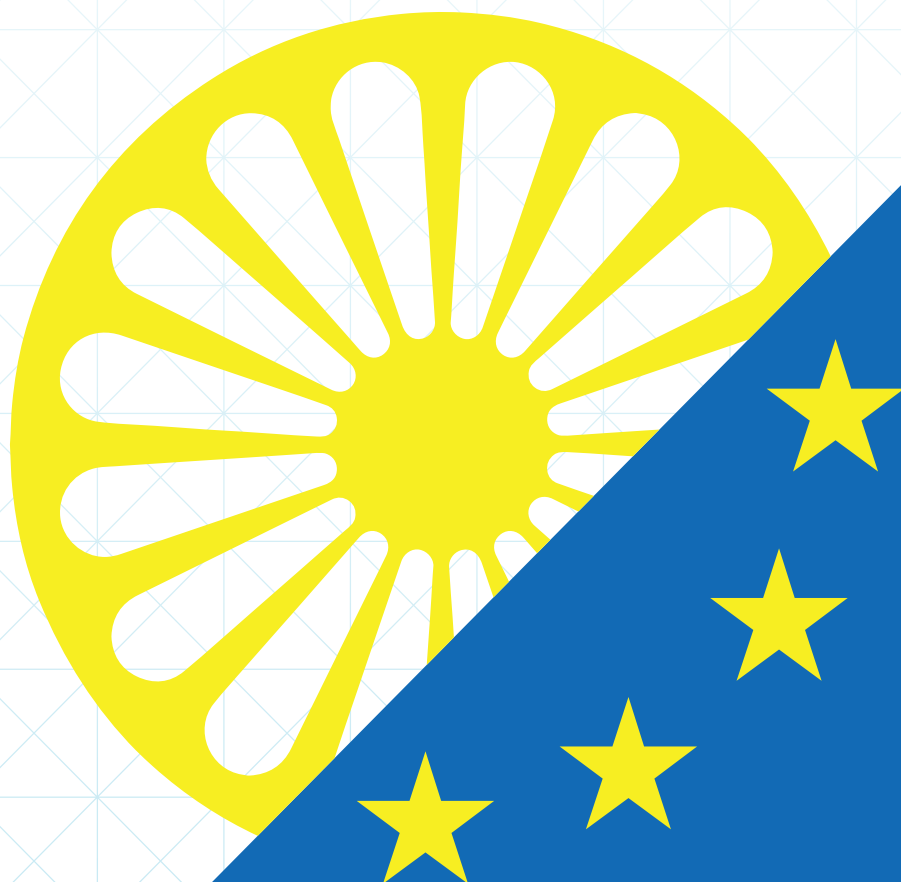
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FINAL REPORT

July 2012 – June 2015



Supporting Social Inclusion of
Roma and Egyptian Communities (SSIREC) Project

Project No./Ref.: 00083017
2012/284-615

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Important Disclaimer

Supporting Social Inclusion of Roma and Egyptian Communities is an EU-funded project. The direct beneficiaries of the project are Roma and Egyptian communities living in the regions of Korca, Vlora and Berat. The project was implemented by United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Country Office in Albania in partnership with the Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth. Views and comments in this report do not necessarily reflect the views of the abovementioned institutions.

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ACRONYMS

ARSIS	Association for the Social Support of Youth
BPRI	Best Practices for Roma Integration
CCF	Community Counseling Forums
CDP	Community Development Plans
CPD	Commissioner on Protection from Discrimination
CUP	Community Upgrading Projects
CSO	Civil Society Organizations
EU	European Union
IDM	Institute for Democracy and Mediation
IT	Information Technology
LG	Local Government
MoSWY	Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NCCS	National Center for Community Services
NGO	Non-Governmental Organizations
NPO	Non Profit Organizations
NTCE	National Transitory Center for Emergencies
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PA	Peoples' Advocate
RCASN	Regional Committees on Assessment of Social Needs
ROM	Results Oriented Monitoring
SSIREC	Supporting Social Inclusion of Roma and Egyptian Communities
TRCR	Technical Regional Committees for Roma
TVSH	National Public Television
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
VET	Vocational Education Training
WP	Work Package

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The main objective of the project “Supporting Social Inclusion of Roma and Egyptian Communities” (SSIREC) was to contribute to social and economic empowerment of Roma and Egyptian people in Albania and improve social inclusion focusing in the regions of Berat, Korca and Vlora. The project relied on a multi-sectorial and self-empowerment approach and contained five components as follows: (1) participatory local planning and implementation of Community Upgrading Projects (CUP); (2) capacity building for Roma and Egyptian Civil Society Organizations (CSOs); (3) promoting employability and income generation in Roma and Egyptian communities; (4) assistance on implementation and monitoring of the social inclusion policies targeting Roma and Egyptian communities; (5) advocating for greater respect and appreciation of cultural diversity. Beneficiaries of the Action were Roma and Egyptian youth, civil society organizations, job-seekers, artisans, and potential entrepreneurs. The MoSWY and local authorities in three regions played a key role in implementing specific project activities and were all represented in the Project Management Committee. Approximately 2,500 Roma and Egyptian households (over 1000 in Korca; about 600 in Vlora and approx. 900 in Berat) amounting to 10,000 people benefited directly from project’s interventions in three regions

The implementation of the Action started in July 2012 and the project ended in June 2015. Regardless of a slowdown of processes in public administration due to June 2013 parliamentary elections, the project progressed well, particularly with prioritization and implementation of ten infrastructure interventions, provision of trainings and small grants to fifteen Roma and Egyptian Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), enhancing employment and entrepreneurial skills and opportunities for over 300 Roma and Egyptian individuals as well as creating an appreciative climate for cultural diversity while advocating for greater social inclusion in three regions.

The project has been implemented within a period when Albanian government has been committed to the international initiative on Roma Inclusion Decade and later to the European Union framework for Roma integration. The civil society organizations have been pushing on national and local authorities for aligning their actions with recommendations of European Commission Progress Reports on Albania. Meanwhile, the enhanced communication, among line ministries and between the Directorate of Social Inclusion at MoSWY, and the regional councils and particularly municipalities and communes in three regions, led to greater commitment at different levels (local, regional and national one) on the implementation of measures targeting social inclusion of Roma and Egyptian communities. All such developments have impacted positively the implementation of project activities. At local level, the project found synergies with other locally-oriented small scale interventions implemented by local CSOs and partnership with specialized local agencies was another enabling factor for project work related to community participation and empowerment. In turn, project has served as a catalyst of various local and regional development initiatives, and as a result, also as a ground for international community to better direct its support in tackling inclusion of these under-represented and marginalized groups.

The project closure event was held on June 12, 2015. Focusing on “Advancing Social Inclusion of Roma

and Egyptian Communities” this event brought together beneficiaries, local and central government officials, project partners and other organizations operating in Albania. The event provided a critical review of the effective practices employed by the project, discussed the sustainability of project benefits and served to provide useful guide for future interventions on social inclusion. A user friendly brochure is also prepared featuring project highlights. Project evaluation took place during June – July 2015. It included site visits, interviews and focus groups with beneficiaries, local and central government counterparts and involved Roma and Egyptian CSOs as well as non-Roma and Egyptian CSOs. The evaluation team composed of international and national evaluators analyzed the intervention’ relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability.

Main Achievements:

- Enhanced active citizenship among Roma and Egyptian communities and strengthened participatory planning capacities of local authorities led to inclusive prioritization and allocation of infrastructure investments in areas populated by both communities.

Three regional profiles of Korca, Vlora and Berat containing data on Roma and Egyptian population size, challenges and potentials, were prepared to guide the work of the project and served as baseline for other interventions. Ten Roma and Egyptian Community Counseling Forums (CCFs) (4 in Korca, 4 in Berat and 2 in Vlora) were mobilized to implement 78 initiatives in the form of community mobilization, self-help and informative activities in three regions. Such forums were pivotal for drafting Roma and Egyptian Community Development Plans (CDPs) in three project regions. The project focused on strengthening institutional capacities of local Roma and Egyptian CSOs aiming to have these mobilize the CCFs for ensuring a continued collaboration between Roma and Egyptian communities and respective local authorities. Four Community Development Plans focusing on Roma and Egyptian communities were prepared by four local government units (Municipality of Korca, Bucimas Commune, Novosela Commune, and Berat Municipality) in three regions. A participatory approach was followed to come up with such plans for 2015-2020 and experts from the Roma and Egyptian communities were active part of the working groups. Ten infrastructure interventions (i.e. construction of kindergartens, health centers, roads, sports grounds, and intercultural community centers) were completed in Roma and Egyptian neighborhoods or in areas easily accessible by them, in three regions. An informative package-containing criteria and procedures for accessing key social/public services, has been prepared to help Roma and Egyptian individuals accessing their civic rights in the areas of civil registration, social protection, education, employment and vocational education and training, social housing, legal aid, and health care. The informative package was introduced through six workshops involving representatives of local and central government and members of CSOs. Held respectively in Korca (28-29 April 2015), Berat (7-8 May 2015) and Vlora (11-12 May 2015) these workshops introduced the packages and enabled project participants to make use of them. These workshops guided the local government in planning and operationalizing the work of the newly established intercultural community centers.

- Roma and local Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) strengthened their institutional capacities and became a reliable partner for fighting discrimination and furthering Roma and Egyptian social inclusion at local and central levels.

A capacity and training needs assessment of Roma and Egyptian Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) revealed challenges and potentials of these CSOs. It drew attention toward institutional strengthening of Roma and Egyptian CSOs, and turning them into an important factor in the country's agenda for social inclusion. A comprehensive training and coaching program on 12 relevant areas of learning were delivered to members of local Roma and Egyptian CSOs, resulting in strengthening their work on advocacy, fundraising and management practices. A package crafted as a call for proposals, containing application guidelines and various templates served to invite Roma and Egyptian CSOs to access funding in 2013 and 2014. After a careful review of a number of applications received, SSIREC provided support to fifteen proposals submitted by Roma and Egyptian CSOs and three joint proposals developed by Roma and Egyptian CSOs and non-Roma and Egyptian NGOs. While the cost of each proposal was around 10,000 EUR, the projects resulted to be transformative for both, the participating CSOs and Roma and Egyptian people that benefited in Korca, Berat and Vlora regions. Roma and Egyptian CSOs responded to community needs and became important factors in setting local development agendas.

- Roma and Egyptian households enabled to diversify their sources of income through starting up innovative self-employment and income generation initiatives.

An assessment on employment, challenges and opportunities for Roma and Egyptian trainees, artisans and potential entrepreneurs was supported by SSIREC project. The assessment report provided a set of recommendations which guided the actions for this component of the project. A database with regional vocational training and micro-credit providers, was developed and was made available to interested Roma and Egyptian households in three regions. The project funded the development, the design and printing of a manual entitled "100 innovative ideas for self-employment". This manual contained practical and simple ideas identifying what to do, guidelines on small start-ups for income generation activities, and guidelines for preparation of business plans. These triggered Roma and Egyptian project participants to come up with creative income generation ideas i.e. car washing, DJ and music production, ambulant trading, tattoo making, farming, etc. while it enabled job-seekers to find different approaches to enter the local labor market. In response to the findings of the assessment, SSIREC project organized vocational courses on traditional professions such as hairdresser, aesthetician, cook, mechanic, barber, welder, and tailor and new innovative areas like: camera operator, video-assembler, news reporter etc. Vocational courses, on the job training and assistance to entrepreneurs was provided to 341 Roma and Egyptian individuals in three regions. In addition to vocational training, project participants were provided with coaching and guidance that helped to focus their efforts on strengths which could be used to generate income. Various participants focused in areas such as medicinal plant cultivation, car washing, small trade, recycling and transportation, music performance and

production, cattle breeding etc. Over 50 Roma and Egyptian artisans from three regions were assisted with product design and marketing skills through participation in trainings and artisans' fairs.

- Social inclusion policies on Roma and Egyptian in the country got aligned with regional successful practices reflecting local needs and potentials while effective tools for their successful implementation and monitoring are developed and institutionalized.

Assistance was provided to MoSWY for aligning the local policies on Social Inclusion of Roma with the EU 2020 platform for Roma integration ensuring an informed participation of Roma and Egyptian CSOs. A participatory process took place for finalization of the Action Plan for Integration of Roma and Egyptians 2020, involving civil society, local authorities as well as line ministries. The project involved a team of international and national experts including two young Roma and Egyptian professionals. The draft was finalized and it is expected to get the approval of the Council of Ministers within 2015. 16 training sessions and on the job coaching were provided to 112 local and central government officials on the web-based monitoring and reporting system (RomAlb). The system underpins the new Action Plan for Roma and Egyptian Integration 2015-2020 and serves to measure its progress. The system is an integral part of the National Social Inclusion Policy document.

- Human rights institutions (People's Advocate and Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination) enhanced their outreach and expertise in responding to rights violations of Roma and Egyptian communities.

Technical expertise was provided to People's Advocate for finalization of three legal amendment on social housing, economic aid and transfer of residence, in response to the situation of Roma evicted families in Tirana prior to their sheltering at the Transitory Center of Emergencies. The project contributed to the development of a legal "how to" manual as well as a community outreach guide with particular focus on Roma and Egyptian communities. These resources were utilized by the staff of Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination to address cases involving Roma and Egyptians individuals. The project supported three information events which were followed by three field visits of the Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination. The commissioner met youth groups and representatives of Roma and Egyptians CSOs, in February 2014 reaching out to about 150 Roma and Egyptian households in three regions. Two qualified Roma and Egyptian university graduates fellows were supported to serve as facilitators for protection from discrimination, respectively at the Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination and People's Advocate for a period of one year. The project lobbied strongly to ensure a permanent status of these fellows in the respective institutions.

- Public awareness and acceptance of Roma and Egyptian identities increased as a result of a country-wide communication campaign under the slogan "you and I, equal in diversity" which promoted the

appreciation of cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue.

Nine prominent personalities from the world of art, literature, media and academia were announced as Cultural Diversity Goodwill Ambassadors. They were involved in the campaign along with other Roma and Egyptian role models to convey messages of social inclusion and appreciation for cultural diversity. A training manual was produced, targeting reporters and helping them to better inform the public on issues pertaining to cultural diversity with a focus on Roma and Egyptian Communities. The project team in partnership with Media Institute trained and disseminated the manuals to over 100 journalists working in Albania. Two training sessions were organized with 53 young journalists enhancing their skills on reporting about minorities with an exclusive focus on anti-discrimination, protection of human dignity and cultural diversity. A national contest was organized for the best human story on minorities with a focus on Roma and Egyptian people. Three reporters were awarded for their excellence in reporting about diversity. Results from project interventions, success stories highlighting the contribution of common people who turned into role models for their communities, were featured in various media channels. Three documentaries namely “Equal in Diversity”; “When Dreams Become Reality” and “A step toward social inclusion”, have been produced and broadcasted. Three TV shows focusing on the assistance provided by SSIREC project were broadcasted in the life of the project. These TV programs involved not only Roma and Egyptian beneficiaries but also representatives of key institutions such as Minister of Social Welfare and Youth, People’s Advocate and Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination. A series of cultural events took place during project implementation. These were organized by the project team in partnership with central and local authorities, University of Arts and National Historical Museum. These events served to promote talented Roma and Egyptian artists and artisans while created opportunities for the wider public to appreciate the culture and creativity of Roma and Egyptian people. Some of the major activities supported by the project involved artisans’ fairs where over 30 artisans participated; staged the drama “Les Miserables” interpreted by some 20 Roma and Egyptian youth and University of Arts students; exhibited the works of a talented Roma visual artist with the theme “My Place” featured also in a brochure; announced the nine Cultural Diversity Goodwill Ambassadors and other Roma and Egyptian role models and presented documentaries on human rights. Sports events accompanied the campaign and three football teams (one in each region) composed of Roma and Egyptian young men, were supported by the project. Periodically thematic football matches were organize in collaboration with Local Government representatives and distinguished personalities. During the life of the project, five matches (three in Berat, one in Vlora and one in Korca) took place on internationally celebrated days such as the World day for Cultural diversity, anti-discrimination day etc. The Project facilitated negotiations between National Public Albanian TV (TVSH) and Disutni Albania (a Roma CSO) to commence regular broadcasting in Romani language. Since December 2013 TVSH is hosting the program with an increased audience. This experience brought forward the discussion for a dedicated program for all minorities in the country. Social media was regularly utilized for promoting successful stories of Roma and Egyptian individuals involved in different project activities. This led to raising their public profile and they were offered several education, training and employment opportunities. Site visits of journalists were organized in three regions in the month of June 2015

and Roma and Egyptian beneficiaries were provided with the opportunity to share their experiences during the past three years of project implementation. They became protagonists in different stories covered by the media and these all together served to inspire and motivate other people to get engaged in improving their own lives.

BUDGET AND EXPENDITURES

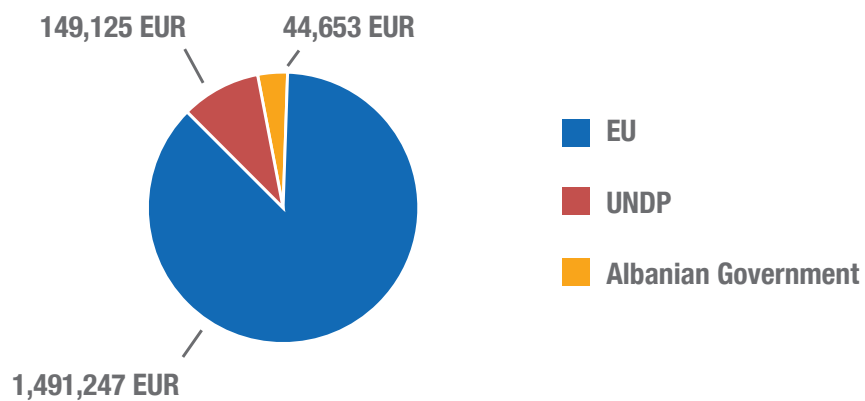
Overall project funding was 1, 695,000.00 €, (1,500,000.00 € from European Union; 150,000.00 € from UNDP core funds; and 45,000.00 € from Albanian Government Funds).

The project delivery is 1,685,025 EUR or 99.41% of the total budget. Based on the percentage of contribution of each donor, the delivery is: EU – 1,491,247 EUR; UNDP – 149,125 EUR; Albanian Government – 44,653 EUR.

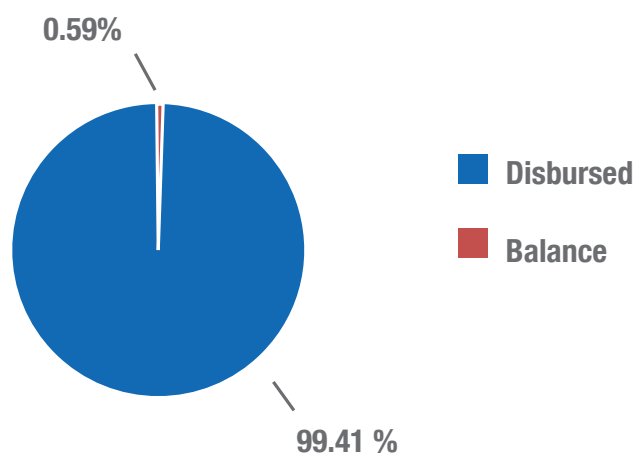
Division of the expenditures based on % of contribution in EUR

Donors	Amount	% of contribution
EUD	1,491,247 EUR	88.50%
UNDP	149,125 EUR	8.85%
Gov of Albania	44,653 EUR	2.65%
Total Expenditures in EUR	1,685,025 EUR	100.00%

Project Delivery per Donors



Project Delivery as per Total Funds



PROGRESS DURING THE REPORTING PERIOD

WP1. Establishment of the Project Management Structures and Procedures

1.1 Signature of the Contribution Agreement, Core project staff selected, project management procedures drafted and operational, project launched and operational

The European Union Delegation in Albania, the United Nations Development Programme and the former Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities launched the project on July 11, 2012. The launching ceremony took place in Korca Municipality. This event was accompanied by an intercultural artisans' fair organized at the city's traditional market place where Roma and Egyptian artisans from the region displayed their crafts. The event was attended by representatives of central and local authorities, as well as local civil society organizations and other partner organizations involved in social inclusion.

Following the launching event, UNDP started the preparatory work for project commencement. 11 staff members were hired and four local offices were established.¹ The staff recruitment process took longer than expected due to efforts to hire the best qualified candidates. The project was fully operational in January 2013. This in turn, brought up the need for a no-cost extension of the project till June 30, 2015 which was approved by EU Delegation. The progress towards objectives has been documented regularly².

The Project operated based on the approved work plan³ which reflects recommendations provided by the Project Management Committee⁴.

WP2. Participatory Planning and Infrastructure Supported Projects

2.1 Rapid Assessment of Potential Intervention Areas

A data collection and consultation process was undertaken during the first quarter of project implementation in three regions with the participation of local government, regional authorities, community activists, and leaders of Roma and Egyptian CSOs and non-Roma and Egyptian CSOs. Three Regional Profiles for Korca, Berat and Vlora were prepared identifying and describing Roma and Egyptian settlements in each region, size of population, social economic situation, the presence of discriminatory practices, the challenges of Roma and Egyptian Communities in accessing or benefitting public services such as civil registration, housing, social welfare, representation in local government forums, associations, and media. In addition, these profiles present a summary of local authorities and other partner organizations' efforts for inclusive policies and practices targeting Roma and Egyptians.

1 One office was in Tirana and three offices were located in regions of Vlore, Korce and Berat

2 See Annex 1.2 Progress vs. Objectives Matrix July 2012 – June 2015

3 See Annex 1.3 Work Plan for July 2012 – June 2015

4 See Annex 1.4 Project Management Committee Meetings (five) July 2012 – February 2015

The regional profiles presented a wealth of information on the regions, served to shed light on the communities and issues which were not known to many. They also served as a baseline, guiding the planning, implementation and monitoring of activities in the three target regions.

The three regional profiles highlighted the similarities and differences identified in Roma and Egyptian communities, underlined challenges they face and pointed out the potential in each of the regions. The common challenges in the three regions related to the lack of employment opportunities, underdeveloped infrastructure and limited access to social services.

The three assessed regions have somewhat different profiles in terms of the economic activities in which community members are involved. In Korca handcrafting and civil society are more developed than in other regions. In Berat and Vlora farming and agriculture offer greater opportunities. Roma and Egyptian communities in three regions are settled, residing both in rural and semi-urban areas. Korca offers comparatively greater advantages for the integration of Roma and Egyptian communities due to its favorable geographic location (bordering Greece), and ethnically diverse population with a relatively better socio-economic situation. All three regions are highly representative of the needs, barriers and potentials of the Roma and Egyptian communities in Albania⁵. The participatory inception workshop organized at the start of the project (October 3, 2012) helped to agree on the project approaches making use of the baseline data of the regional profiles⁶.

78 community mobilization, self-help and informative activities were organized in three regions during the life of the project, involving regularly over 350 Roma and Egyptian individuals;

Informative sessions were facilitated with experts on education, housing, employment, social welfare and legal aid. Experts provided answers to over 450 Roma and Egyptian individuals participating in these sessions in three regions.

Combination of self-help activities with sports and recreational events led to greater involvement of Roma and Egyptian youth and their non-Roma and Egyptian peers. These activities contributed to an increased appreciation of cultural diversity.

The process led to the identification of 10 Roma and Egyptian populated settlements falling under 8 local government units⁷ as the geographic areas where the project would work on participatory planning and infrastructure development interventions. In addition the process emphasized the need for mobilizing communities to implement self-help initiatives that would encourage a sense of active citizenship while sustaining the impact of the Action's infrastructure investments.

⁵ See Annex 2 Three Regional Profiles for Korca, Berat and Vlora

⁶ See Annex 2.1 SSIREC Inception Report 2012

⁷ The localities included in Vlora Region (Vlora Municipality, Shushica Commune, and Novosela Commune); in Berat Region (Berat Municipality, and Otlak Commune); in Korca Region (Korca Municipality, Pogradec Municipality and Bucimas Commune). According to estimate these areas are populated by more than 2500 Roma and Egyptian households.

2.2 Community mobilization activities

The community mobilization and self-help component of the Action has created a new culture of active citizenship in Korca, Berat and Vlora, where Roma and Egyptian Community Counseling Forums, social activists, community leaders and community members increasingly were viewed as a key factor in setting local development priorities and bringing the Roma and Egyptian voice closer to local decision-makers⁸.

A variety of self-help and mobilization activities took place in three regions. They focused on promotion of equal education, voluntarism, human rights, women empowerment, environmental protection, marketing of artisan products, building of coalitions and cultural exchange. Sports activities served to increase awareness of and educate the wider society about the project activities and richness of cultural diversity.

With the aim of promoting intercultural exchanges amongst various minority and majority groups, Roma and Egyptian young men mobilized by Roma and Egyptian CSOs were supported by the project to organize five thematic football matches (3 in Berat, 1 in Korca and 1 in Vlora) with the participation of 106 individuals including Roma and Egyptian youth, artists, local authorities, police, journalists etc. These activities took place in internationally celebrated days such as the day for Cultural Diversity and Anti-Discrimination day. The newly established intercultural community centers in partnership with Roma and Egyptian CSOs will further sustain such initiatives. The internationally celebrated days were introduced by intercultural community centers into the annual awareness raising calendar of education, health, and employment institutions.

In addition to cultural exchanges among Roma and Egyptian and other parts of population, the project gave particular attention to greater and equal participation of female Roma and Egyptian individuals as they are the most vulnerable groups suffering multi-dimensional discrimination on the grounds of gender, ethnicity, and economic situation.

2.3 Reinforcing representation of Roma and Egyptian in the Local Government Level

community development coordinators and Roma and Egyptian community facilitators in the three regions assisted the officials at the Regional level to facilitate meetings of Technical Regional Committees for Roma (TRCR) (Grupi Teknik për Çështjet Rome). They are composed of representatives of education directorates, employment offices, healthcare departments, municipalities, commune leaders of communes inhabited by Roma and Egyptian communities, and representatives of Roma and Egyptian civil society organizations.

The terms of reference for functioning of the TRCR, as a subcommittee of the Regional Committees on Assessment of Social Needs (RCASN), (Komiteti Rajonal për Vlerësimin e Nevojave Sociale) were tailored in alignment with the decision of Council of Ministers regulating the functioning of the RCASN, and based on the established practice in other regions where UNDP intervened in the past, in support of Roma and Egyptian

⁸ See Annex 2.2 Community Mobilization and Self-help Activities in three Regions

communities. The TRCR meets periodically and assists the RCASN to keep track of the progress towards implementation of national policies on social inclusion of Roma and Egyptians⁹.

Regardless of the political rotation in Regional Directorates of education, employment, health and social services, the project facilitated two formal meetings of the Technical Regional Committees for Roma (TRCR) (Grupi Teknik për Çështjet Rome) in Vlora¹⁰ and Berat¹¹.

In such meetings, great emphasis was put on the need for adjusting and approving the pilot web-based reporting system (RomAlb) by Council of Ministers and provision of training to the designated officials responsible for regular data entry. Although under the new territorial reform, the Regional Committees on Assessment of Social Needs (RCASN), (Komiteti Rajonal për Vlerësimin e Nevojave Sociale), and its Technical Regional Committees for Roma (TRCR) (Grupi Teknik për Çështjet Rome) are expected to be reshaped. The gained experience will be guiding the people involved in shaping the role of local and regional authorities on social inclusion. The project worked closely with local authorities for a smooth transfer of knowledge in this regard.

Roma and Egyptian CSOs were enabled to participate and take the leadership of Roma and Egyptian Community Counseling Forums. These forums were mobilized during the first year of project implementation and their size varied between 15 to 20 participants each including but not limited to members of Roma and Egyptian CSOs, artisans and other self-employed individuals, as well as youth, students and activists having regard to equal participation of both men and women. The members of the forum were guided with methods of participatory planning and self-help following which they met frequently at least once a month to discuss issues of common concern and address them for solution to respective authorities and other local service providers. The functioning initially was facilitated by project staff and gradually taken over by local Roma and Egyptian CSOs and resulted in setting of local community priorities, implementation of self-help initiatives, addressing community needs in the meetings of the city councils as well as in the consultation meetings for preparation annual municipal budgets. This approach built on participatory governance models applied successfully in previous UNDP interventions in various regions of Albania (starting with the Local Governance Program during 2002 – 2005 and subsequently applied to Roma and Egyptian communities through the Empowering the Vulnerable Communities Projects during 2008-2011).

The forums served to voice the concerns of Roma and Egyptian communities at local participatory planning and budgeting processes in three regions. This is particularly important achievement when the newly drafted Policy Document on Social Inclusion 2015-2020, anticipates establishment of Citizens Counsels (Këshill Qytetar) at local level relying on the model of SSIREC on community counseling forums.

In addition, local government units in project areas operationalized the newly built intercultural community centers, health centers, kindergarten etc., and hired Roma and Egyptian qualified individuals as part of their staff. To date, municipalities of Berat and Pogradec and the commune of Novosela have hired Roma and

9. See Annex 2.3 Terms of Reference for Technical Regional Committee on Roma (TRCR)

10. 10 October, 2013

11. 24 September, 2013

Egyptian individuals while Korca municipality will do so, following June 2015's local elections. This practice has added another dimension in the Roma and Egyptian representation at local level where they are not only beneficiaries of services but also part of local administration. The project encouraged employment of qualified Roma and Egyptian individuals in contracted local professional agencies and companies as well as in institutions responsible for human rights and protection from discrimination as described in WP 4, section 4.2 below.

Aiming to assist the local government in consolidating the plans to operationalize the newly established intercultural community centers, in partnership with Roma and Egyptian CSOs six local training-workshops with representatives of local government and CSOs were held respectively in Korca¹², Berat¹³ and Vlora¹⁴. The workshops provided participants with practical guidance how to make local services more accessible by under-represented groups through strengthened communication between Roma and Egyptian CSOs and respective local authorities. In addition these workshops contributed to the discourse on adjusting the community development plans to the new administrative territorial reform¹⁵. In order to better accommodate the number of participants with the variety of the topics covered, it was seen appropriate to have two training-workshops in each region instead of one as originally planned, leading to overall six trainings. Meanwhile, central officials including focal points in line ministries and staff of MoSWY received this training combined with the training on RomAlb monitoring system explained in section 5.1 of this report.

2.4 Preparation and Signature of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between UNDP and Local Government.

The project team worked closely with local governments in selected regions ensuring their institutional involvement at all phases of project implementation. The Memorandum of Understandings (MoU) were prepared and signed with 10 local and regional authorities; three in Korca region (Municipality of Korca, Municipality Pogradec, and Commune of Bucimas); four in Vlora region (Vlora Regional Council, Municipality of Vlora, as well as Communes of Novosela and Shushica), and three in Berat region (Berat Regional Council, Municipality of Berat and Commune of Otlak). These MoUs have specified the modalities of cooperation for preparation of Community Development Plans and the Community Upgrading Projects (CUP). The Local Governments' financial contribution to Community Upgrading Projects is not an obligatory or mandatory requirement for the Local Government Units benefiting from the infrastructure projects. Neither the description of the action nor the budget refers to financial contribution from the side of Local Governments in these areas.

Their contribution in the life of the project was a clear indication of local government units going beyond project requirements to respond to challenges faced by Roma and Egyptian communities. These Local Government units indicated that issues of Roma and Egyptian communities are the issues of everyone in these areas and as duty bearers they took responsibility to contribute in addressing the priority needs of these

12. 28-29 April, 2015

13. 7-8 May, 2015

14. 11-12 May, 2015

15 See Annex 2.4 Reports on local workshops

groups. Even though the team was aware of the financial crisis and budgetary cuts in the local budget, still the project team rigorously and continuously negotiated with local authorities to reinforce their commitment as duty bearers to development priorities of Roma and Egyptian Communities. The priority needs of Roma and Egyptian communities are understood to be part and parcel of Municipality and/or Administrative Units' plans and actions¹⁶.

2.5 Design and Implement Roma and Egyptian Community Development Plans

Community Counseling Forums (CCFs) enabled Roma and Egyptian communities in the 10 geographical focal areas (under administration of 8 local government units) to participate in and contribute to the processes of participatory budgeting and preparation of Community Development Plans.

To ensure meaningful and informed participation of Roma and Egyptian people into such processes, the project team provided training involving 60 local officials and over 150 Roma and Egyptian CCF members. The trainings took place respectively on January 30, 2014 in Korca, February 4, 2014 in Berat and February 11, 2014 in Vlora. Participants were introduced with participatory planning methodologies. The training was structured in five sessions consisting of: preparatory work; community mapping; drafting of community development plans; budgeting and implementation; and monitoring and evaluation. The training contributed to strengthening the collaboration of local authorities with Roma and Egyptian civil society.

Additionally, six training workshops took place in three regions. They covered topics such as participatory strategic planning and action plans. These workshops were followed by sessions on the bank of ideas where community members and CCFs were provided with a forum to share their ideas for desired improvements that could be priorities for their areas. 60 local officials, participants in such activities, increased their understanding of challenges and opportunities concerning Roma and Egyptian communities in each of the three regions. These events helped on one hand to build the capacities of Local Governments and CCFs and on the other hand they helped to collect the necessary data used for drafting four Roma and Egyptian Community Development Plans which benefited the selected areas (Korca Municipality, Bucimas Commune Novosela Commune, Berat Municipality) in three regions¹⁷.

In collaboration with the Institute for Democracy and Mediation¹⁸ (IDM) the project team formed working groups. Represented in these groups were Local Governments, CCFs members and experts where 6 among them were Roma and Egyptian qualified individuals (3 male and 3 female). The Roma and Egyptian qualified individuals were hired by IDM to more intentionally reach the communities and coordinate the work. The working groups in consultation with the wider communities and Local Government representatives developed the Community Development Plans. The plans combine actions such as tax exemption initiatives for Roma and Egyptian artisans and small entrepreneurs, employment of qualified Roma and Egyptian individuals in local administration, with infrastructure development involving construction of intercultural community centers, kindergarten, roads, sewage systems etc. These plans are aligned with National Action Plan for

16 See Annex 2.5 MoUs with Local Government Units in Three regions

17 See Annex. 2.6 Final Report on Preparation of Community Development Plans

18 a reputable specialized local organization in local governance and community participation

Roma Inclusion and anticipate local measures is response to Education, (school segregation), Housing (poor housing conditions), Vocational training (inability to attend vocational trainings), Access to basic services (lack of civil registration documentation, inability to become part of social welfare or pension schemes, the need for free legal aid and the like). Such plans represent a useful guide on how the new territorial reform could respond to social inclusion of Roma and Egyptians in the years to come¹⁹.

A manual for local authorities on participatory planning and budgeting was produced to guide the implementation and monitoring of Community Development Plans. This manual may serve as a reference also for other Local Government units which have Roma and Egyptian communities in their territories²⁰.

2.6 Identify, select and implement ten Community Upgrading Projects

Following a participatory planning process, ten infrastructure priorities were selected for funding in three regions. Interventions were prioritized by Roma and Egyptian CCFs and were financed by the project with cost-sharing from respective local government units in these areas. The selection of such priorities was based on the number of beneficiaries, affordable construction, ability to cover for running and maintenance cost and on the expected sustainability and impact these would have on the social integration of Roma and Egyptian communities.

In addition to nine interventions identified by CCFs and agreed with the local government, the project rehabilitated the National Transitory Center for Emergencies in Tirana. This was done in response to sheltering emergency needs of evicted Roma families in Tirana, upon request of MoSWY and with the approval from European Union (EU). The project managed to accommodate this intervention along with nine other infrastructure interventions identified in the regions, bringing the number of infrastructure interventions to ten. These were implemented with the existing project budget.

At the end of the project it can be reported that all ten infrastructure interventions are completed and are fully operational. The interventions include: a kindergarten and school library in

Establishment of Intercultural Community Centers has introduced a new outreach approach for Local Governments to bring services closer to all citizens. These centers promote social integration of Roma and Egyptian communities through facilitating access to public services in the areas of education, health care, housing, employment and entrepreneurship, while fostering inter-cultural dialogue with majority groups.

The Centers provide socio-economic-cultural information and serve as a place for organizing trainings and workshops, informative sessions as well as exhibiting and promoting artisan products. This practice has been included in the operational guidelines for intercultural community centers that have been constructed in Korca, Pogradec and Berat*.

*See Annex 2. 9 Operational Guidelines for Intercultural Community Centers

¹⁹ See Annex 2.7 Community Development Plans for three regions

²⁰ See Annex 2.8 Manual on Participatory Planning and Budgeting for LGs

Novosela, Vlorë; a kindergarten, health care center, and intercultural community center in Berat; a intercultural community center in Pogradec, a road rehabilitation in Shushica, Vlorë; a road rehabilitation in Vlorë and Otlak; construction of the intercultural community center and sports ground in Korça; rehabilitation of a neighborhood square in Korça; and lastly the rehabilitation of Transitory Center for Emergencies in Tirana. Local contribution both in kind and financial was provided by Local Government units (i.e. Berat and Korça Municipalities). Several Local Government units (i.e. Novosela and Shushica Communes, as well as Pogradec, Vlorë, Berat and Korça Municipalities)²¹ contributed with preparation of technical design, implementation of infrastructure works and have made commitments to cover the maintenance costs. They have initiated the work for making these facilities operational. So far, three Roma and Egyptian individuals were hired by Local Governments to work in the new facilities and others are in process of recruitment.

Construction of the kindergarten, health care center and intercultural community center in Berat Municipality

600 Roma and Egyptian families and approximately 200 non-Roma and Egyptian families living in the surroundings of the facility recently built with the assistance provided by SSIREC project, benefit from the services provided there. Services include pre-school education, health and dental care. In addition, the Roma and Egyptian CSOs and other CSOs in Berat Municipality use the environments of the center for their activities, involving youth, women groups etc. fostering and facilitating social integration and cultural exchanges. Presently 17 Roma children go to the kindergarten and according to estimates of education authorities their number is expected to increase to 30 children in the coming year. The increased attendance of pre-school education by Roma children is key to their early stimulation and preparation for primary education. This approach positions the children to be on equal footing with other children entering primary education. Municipality of Berat has employed a qualified member of the Egyptian community in the capacity of the coordinator for the intercultural community center. Regional Directorate of Education and Regional Directorate of Health have provided relevant staff for the kindergarten and the health center.

Rehabilitation of kindergarten and library of nine-year school in Novosela Commune, Vlorë

The kindergarten and school library were rehabilitated and complementary furniture was provided by the project. Novosela Commune contributed with rehabilitation of the playground and preparation of technical design. During implementation of works, the construction company hired one Roma individual as construction worker. Novosela Commune resumed full responsibility for covering the running cost of the facility and covering its maintenance. Novosela Commune employed a Roma woman as support staff in the kindergarten in addition to respective personnel hired by education authorities. The kindergarten and school library is benefiting 50 Roma and over 100 non-Roma families living in Novosela (Vlorë region).

21 See Annex 2.10 Project Fiches for Prioritized Infrastructure projects

Rehabilitation of the Intercultural Community Center in Pogradec Municipality

A facility within the City's cultural palace was rehabilitated and transformed into an intercultural community center. The project provided furniture, information materials, IT equipment, and internet access. This facility serves to both civil society organizations and youth groups including but not limited to Roma and Egyptians residing in Pogradec. Currently the center is under the administration of Municipality of Pogradec and is implementing several activities involving both Roma and Egyptian and non-Roma and Egyptian youth benefiting over 1000 households in this municipality. A young qualified woman of the Egyptian community was hired by the municipality as coordinator of the center, which has strengthened the collaboration with Roma and Egyptian NGOs. The Center is intended to provide similar services as those offered at Berat and Korca centers.

Construction of the inner road and sewage system in the Roma neighborhood in Morava, Otlak Commune

The construction of inner road and sewage in Morava village was a top priority of Roma farmers and 170 Roma families have benefited from this project. Several Roma women farmers were cultivating sage-medicinal plants and they wanted easy access to markets. As the project plans were in preparation, the commune and the project staff realized that the construction of the road would not be a long lasting solution if the sewage system was not repaired. However the project and the commune could only fund 650 meters of road and 320 meters of sewage canal. Additional funding was needed for another 330 meters of sewage system. Under such conditions, the Commune prepared the project documents and submitted these to the Ministry of Urban Development. The funding was granted and the project was completed. Hence the village has a road and a newly constructed sewage system. Collaboration, information sharing, openness, pro-activeness made it possible for this project to get finalized.

Learning about ways to develop projects in participatory manner was very important for the commune because right after the completion of this project, they developed and submitted another project at the Ministry of Urban Development addressing the housing needs of community members and they were granted the funds. The increased capacity, the practice of collaboration bared fruits for the Otlak commune and its inhabitants.

Construction of Intercultural Community Center and rehabilitation of Sports Ground in Korca Municipality

The construction works for the intercultural community center and sports ground were finalized by the end of the project. 2000 households from Roma and Egyptian community and other non-Roma and Egyptian communities living in Korca benefit from these works. The municipality prepared the technical designs and contributed significantly to the project budget covering the costs of civil works. In addition, the municipality has committed to cover the running and maintenance costs as well as to hire a Roma qualified individual as part of Center's staff.

Reconstruction of inner road in historic quarter of Vlora inhabited by Egyptians

CCFs and municipality identified the reconstruction of the inner road in Egyptian neighborhood as a first priority. This road rehabilitation was connected with the functioning of the water supply in the quarter. Following an assessment of the intervention and negotiations between the municipality and the water administration enterprise, the project was able to commit the funding and complete the works by June 2015.

Municipality of Vlora has contributed with preparation of the technical designs and has committed to cover maintenance costs. During the execution of works some construction workers from Egyptian community have been hired by the construction company.

Rehabilitation of Roma neighborhood road in Shushica commune, Vlora

At the start of the discussions on priorities, the CCF in Shushice identified the construction of a community center next to the village school. Following the conversations with local government on the maintenance, it was understood that functionality and maintenance were a stretch for the community and the commune. For this reason, CCFs and the local government of this commune proposed to address their second priority which was the rehabilitation of the road in Roma neighborhood. Their rationale for addressing this second priority was that if addressed it would have a big impact on the lives of Roma inhabitants and it would present a reasonable maintenance cost for the authorities. The works were completed and the road is used by local Roma farmers. Shushica Commune has contributed with preparation of technical drawings and planting of trees in sidewalks.

Rehabilitation of Pelion road, Pogradec

Roma and Egyptian Community Counseling Forum (CCF) in Pogradec identified Pelion road rehabilitation as their priority. A main road in the Roma and Egyptian neighborhood used daily by the community especially by children to go to the secondary School “Amaro Tan”, this road was selected because it affected the lives of all in the community. When the road was still under rehabilitation there was a flooding in the area that destroyed the bridge that enabled children and other community members to cross the stream alongside the road. Discussions took place in the community to find a solution for the situation. The community members agreed that they needed a more permanent solution and not a bridge that would be destroyed every time the river crossed its bed. Hence the commune, the project staff and community members worked together to increase the investment and expand the road construction to also include the bridge.

The Local Government contributed with provision of technical drawing and the issuance of required permits. Around 100 Roma and Egyptian families use this road and benefit from its improvement.

Rehabilitation of a neighborhood Square in Korca

The rehabilitation work was an effort to improve an urban neighborhood by building a playground for children, a sport corner for recreational activities, a resting area and a surrounding park. With a crowded population living in collective buildings dating back in 1970-1980, this area offered little to all inhabitants. Roma and Egyptian communities represent about 50% of population in this quarter. Various educational institutions surround the neighborhood such as 9 year schools “Demokracia” and “Naum Veqilharxhi”, school of foreign languages “Faik Konica” and “Medrese” school. Other service provision facilities are located around the area such as the Hospital, Quarter Health Center, Pharmacy shops, a postal office, three hotels, etc. The intervention led to regeneration of this urban area and improvements in other squares between buildings, thus resulting in major improvements in the neighborhood benefiting families and inhabitants of different age-groups from Roma and Egyptian communities and other local residents.

Rehabilitation of the National Transitory Center for Emergencies, Tirana

In response to the alarming situation of evicted Roma families in Tirana, the Project assisted MoSWY to set up and operationalize the National Transitory Center for Emergencies (NTCE) where 53 Roma evicted families were sheltered. This assistance was provided to help them with the emergency needs while in the long run they will be enabled to integrate into the mainstream society. Following the request of MoSWY, and the approval of EUD, the project reallocated the necessary funds from its infrastructure component under WP 2 towards the rehabilitation of the NTCE. In addition the project team provided technical advice on ensuring its operationalization and sustainability²².

²² See Annex 2. 11 Transitory Centre for Emergencies approval and functioning package

Table 1: Community Upgrading Projects agreed for co-financing

Areas	CUP prioritized and agreed for funding	Status
Berat Municipality, Berat Region	Construction of kindergarten/health/intercultural community center in Berat municipality.	Completed and fully operational since June 2014
Commune of Novosela, Vlora Region	Rehabilitation of kindergarten and library of nine-years school in Novosela commune/Vlora.	Completed and fully operational since February 2014
Municipality of Pogradec, Korca Region	Rehabilitation of Intercultural Community Center at the City Cultural Center in Pogradec municipality.	Completed and fully operational since October 2014
Otlak Commune, Berat Region	Construction of main road and sewage in Roma neighborhood in Morava/Otlak.	Works completed in February 2015
Korca Municipality, Korca Region	Construction of Community Intercultural Center and Sports Ground in Korca municipality.	Works completed and fully operational since April 2015
Shushica Commune, Vlora Region	Construction of the neighbourhood road in Roma community in Shushica Commune	Completed and fully operational since July 2014
Shtish Tufina, Tirana	Rehabilitation of the National Transitory Center for Emergencies	Completed and fully operational since June 2015
Municipality of Pogradec, Korca Region	Rehabilitation of Pelion road in Pogradec	Completed and fully operational since November 2014
Municipality of Vlora, Vlora region	Rehabilitation of Llonxhe road in partizani quarter in Vlora	Works completed in June 2015
Municipality of Korca	Rehabilitation of a neighborhood Square in Korca	Works completed in June 2015

WP3. Strengthening civil society capacity to combat discrimination

3.1 Assessment, capacity building and networking of CSOs in each target region

In collaboration with the National Center for Community Services (NCCS)²³ the project conducted a capacity and training needs assessment involving local Roma and Egyptian CSOs and local groups of activists. This formed the base on which a comprehensive training and coaching program was developed to meet their needs.

²³ NCCS is a professional organization with extensive experience in training and coaching services and quite involved in Roma/Egyptian development initiatives

The assessment highlighted the need for strengthening the institutional capacities of existing and newly-established Roma and Egyptian CSOs. Hence training curricula containing 12 topics was designed and training was provided during July-October 2013 in areas such as project cycle management, financial reporting, fundraising, communications, advocacy and lobbying, minority rights protection, networking and coalition building²⁴.

In addition to training provided, fifteen Roma and Egyptian civil society organizations operating in the regions of Korca, Berat and Vlora were assisted with coaching involving over 30 Roma and Egyptian CSO representatives. The assistance aimed at strengthening capacities and equipping several leaders, staff and volunteers of Roma and Egyptian CSOs with a set of skills and competencies that they could use in the course of their work to advocate, develop and influence policy and facilitate provision of or access to services for Roma and Egyptian communities.²⁵

Training manuals utilized during the training have been reviewed and adapted for the use of Roma and Egyptian CSOs as they conduct their own training and capacity building for their own staff in the future. The training manuals are available on line and at newly established intercultural community centers. They will also be accessible at the EU Information Offices in the country²⁶.

3.2 Support the collaboration between Roma and Egyptian CSOs and non- Roma and Egyptian CSOs

Besides strengthening capacities of various Civil Society Organizations, the project created space for the establishment of partnerships among CSOs in the country. Effective partnerships were established across Roma and Egyptian CSOs as well as between Roma and Egyptian CSOs and other non Roma and Egyptian CSOs. To this purpose served the call for proposals focusing on non-discrimination and tolerance. It aimed to strengthen the mutual trust and increase the exchanges between Roma and Egyptian and non-Roma and Egyptian CSOs while they jointly served the wider communities promoting inter-ethnic collaboration and appreciation of diversity. Three joint proposals were funded and implemented during July 2014-March 2015. In order to ensure that each subsequent call for proposal was effectively responding to actual situation, in addition to the needs assessment that preceded the first call, two additional feedback gathering events (named bank of ideas) took place respectively with local Roma and Egyptian CSOs on October 14, 2014, and with both Roma/Egyptian and non-Roma/Egyptian CSOs on February 27, 2015. The implementation of shared initiatives placed these CSOs in the position to model collaboration and demonstrate to all that they could deliver results together in waste recycling, environment protection and pre-school education in three regions where SSIREC was implemented.

24 See Annex 3.1 Capacity and Training Assessment Report on Roma and Egyptian CSOs

25 See Annex 3.2 Report on Training and Coaching Program provided to Roma and Egyptian CSOs

26 See Annex 3.3 Training modules adjusted and utilized for Roma and Egyptian CSOs

3.3 Preparation and Launching of the Small Grants Program

The small grants program was an important component of the project. It followed the training and coaching provided to Roma and Egyptian CSOs and it created opportunities for their further learning and growth. The purpose of the small grants program was two-fold. On one hand it aimed to provide Roma and Egyptian CSOs with solid institutional capacities to continue their work and contribute to the efforts of integration and non-discrimination. On the other hand, the grant intended to enable them to identify, design and implement interventions in which they would take on the leading role. Taking the lead enhanced their self-belief about moving things forward and bringing about the desired changes. In addition they would be an encouragement and role model for others in the community, indicating to all that working together is powerful for changing things and situations.

The project has launched three calls for proposals during November 2013 - July 2014 accompanied by comprehensive guidelines on proposal preparation and submission. The guidelines provided practical templates for proposal drafting, budgeting, and reporting. The materials they had to use for the application enabled the organizations to put their learning to practice. Given that the utilized guidelines and other templates were similar to documents used by other donors, the organizations strengthened their self-confidence and approached other donors diversifying their funding sources.

The calls were focused but not limited on priority areas of the Decade of Roma Inclusion, such as education, health, employment, social inclusion and equal opportunities. Roma and Egyptian CSOs were encouraged to come up with innovative ideas aiming at institutional strengthening, advocating for protection of rights, raising awareness of institutions and communities as well as strengthening their partnerships with non-Roma and Egyptian CSOs²⁷.

Overall eighteen proposals²⁸ were selected for funding based on the eligibility and evaluation criteria announced in the guidelines. According to the criteria, the project ensured support to established organizations led by Roma and Egyptian individuals and groups. Proposals which provided an appropriate, coherent, realistic, sustainable and cost-effective intervention were funded. The 15 project interventions funded through the small grants program were geographically spread as follows: 9 in Korca, 4 in Berat and 2 in Vlora region. The amount provided to each CSO varied between 1 to 1.5 mln ALL each (approx. 10,000 to 15,000 USD). These community development initiatives were implemented during January 2014 to March 2015²⁹. Throughout the implementation, Roma and Egyptian CSOs were assisted and monitored by the project team through a shared monitoring calendar. The project has offered coaching assistance for preparation of interim and final narrative financial reports to participating 15 Roma and Egyptian CSOs³⁰. This effort was key to ensure accountability to SSIREC project and learn about the importance of accountability to the communities, constituencies and other donors they were aspiring to engage in the future.

27 See Annex 3.4 Packages for three calls for proposals

28 fifteen proposals were submitted by Roma and Egyptian CSOs and three from Roma and Egyptian CSOs in partnership with non-Roma and Egyptian CSOs

29 See Annex 3.5 Eighteen Final Report of CSOs

30 See Annex 3.6 CSOs Monitoring and Coaching Report

WP4. Job and Entrepreneurship Promotion

4.1 The assessment of employment and business opportunities for Roma and Egyptian people

The project started this work package with an assessment of the labor market and specifically the employment of Roma and Egyptian people and status of their economic activity encompassing three regions of SSIREC implementation. Employment rate is a proxy indicator for social inclusion. Hence the unemployment rates found among Roma and Egyptians indicate that Albania has some additional work to do to reasonably address social inclusion.

The assessment outlined the challenges and opportunities of Roma and Egyptian job-seekers, artisans and potential entrepreneurs and shed light on the opportunities and challenges faced as they tried to penetrate the market.

The findings and recommendations of the assessment oriented the project's support towards traditional and non-traditional Vocational Education Training (VET). Additionally, the report suggested that SSIREC focuses on craft works and other income generation activities as ways to increase income and improve provisions at household levels while moving gradually towards self-employment (as legally used term indicating formalized labor).

The assessment report warned about the risks of premature formalization of fragile, small scale and non-competitive economic activity undertaken by Roma and Egyptian entrepreneurs. The premature formalization of the economic activity would force Roma and Egyptian people to lose their hardly earned social welfare benefits at a time when their economic activity was not considered profitable to make their ends meet. Such economic activity faces high risks to face bankruptcy fast after registration due to high tax burden, high competition, prejudice towards Roma and Egyptian entrepreneurs and their low level of resilience given the limited wealth and savings under the conditions of limited access to financial services.

The assessment report suggested instead supporting Roma and Egyptian entrepreneurs to develop income generation activities which would allow them to generate income for their families and in the meantime enable them to take the time to study the market and the segments of value chain where they could penetrate with their services and products. Of course such market studies suggested training and coaching and this was a service that the project provided.

The assessment also suggested the development of partnerships between local professional service providers with capacities to provide the required services, support employment and income generation among young Roma and Egyptian entrepreneurs and artisans upon SSIREC's closure. The assessment report provided useful guidance for the project and can be of use for other future interventions³¹.

31 See Annex 4.1 Job and Entrepreneurship Assessment on Roma and Egyptian communities

4.2 Supporting self-employment and entrepreneurship initiatives

Three regional workshops were organized in Korca, Berat and Vlora during July 2013 with the aim of identifying challenges and opportunities of Roma and Egyptian job-seekers, VET trainees, artisans and potential entrepreneurs. These workshops identified the need for bridging the gap between Roma and Egyptian individuals (trainees, artisans and entrepreneurs) and local service providers (VET centers, provision of raw materials, marketing agencies, and supporters of income-generation activities).

Overall 57 participants including Roma and Egyptian individuals and local officials attended the regional workshops helping to map existing practices in each region allowing for better tailor-made and coordinated assistance to Roma and Egyptian people. They brought forward a new vision of collaboration and networking between Roma and Egyptian job-seekers, VET trainees, artisans, potential entrepreneurs and local professional service providers³².

Particularly in Korca, due to a relatively more developed crafting sector, the project assisted Roma and Egyptian artisans to market their products, by facilitating their participation in competitions organized by artisan associations and organization of craftwork fairs. The effect of such fairs was several folds. It increased the confidence of local entrepreneurs who gained experience on marketing and presentation of their products.

Over 50 Roma and Egyptian artisans producing pottery, baskets, embroidery, and metal products have participated in the various fairs. The project has assisted them with product design and marketing, helping them to establish connections and networks with other professional associations. The linkages and networking were considered an important aspect as such networks could help sustain the gains from the investment beyond the life of SSIREC. SSIREC also believed that horizontal learning was important for young entrepreneurs and therefore such fairs served to multiple purposes.

A brochure with products from Roma and Egyptian producers with their contacts was printed and disseminated in Tirana and in the regions, including travel agencies, hotels and restaurants frequently visited by tourists and entrepreneurs. Additionally they created relations with other likeminded people, found groups and institutions

Over 50 Roma and Egyptian artisans have been assisted to market their crafts in various fairs organized annually in various cities of the country, such as:

Commemoration of International Roma day – Week of April 8;

Annual spring artisan fairs - March to May;
Beer & Wine Fests in touristic cities – June to August;

Christmas & New Year's market - December;

The variety of crafts produced by Roma and Egyptian artisans has been featured in a craftwork brochure and attracted the attention of handmade crafts entrepreneurs and retail stores.

³² See Annex 4.2 Activity Reports for Regional Workshops on Roma and Egyptian Employment

that could be of help to them, sold their products and made income while started to get orders based on the demands of the market for their produce. Pogradec and Korca artisans report an increase of demands for their pottery, straw and embroidery products³³.

In addition, artisans of Korca (the region with more potential in craftwork and a higher number of artisans) were assisted to participate in a regional competition for craftwork design, organized with support of Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) and Municipality of Korca. The products designed with support of the project (an embodied plate with a snapshot of Korca) was presented by the Egyptian Embroidery Association and got qualified among the best five products. This has increased the demand for that specific product by the souvenir traders, thus increasing the production and income generation for the Egyptian artisans.

From the project commencement Roma and Egyptian artisans were assisted to market their products in overall eight fairs organized in cities of Berat, Korca and Tirana. More specifically, the fairs have taken place on occasions such as the launching of the project in July 2012 (1); the International Roma day in April 2013-2014 (3); the Small and Medium Enterprise days in November 2013 (1); Artisans fairs in Berat in August 2014 (1); Spring Fair in April 2014 (1); Artisan Corner at Korca Beer Fest in August 2014 (1). To enable the successful marketing of handmade products by Roma and Egyptian artisans, the project organized a two-days training on product design and marketing during 14 -15 December 2013. The training was held in Korca and brought together about 30 Roma and Egyptian artisans from Korca, Berat and Vlora who in addition to theoretical and practical guidance on craft work, had a chance to visit local craft mini-factories and exchange ideas for innovative craft products and their presentation in the market. The training was delivered by handcraft experts operating in the area of tourism and marketing of artisan products. A calendar with cultural events in various cities where craft products are usually marketed has been produced and Roma and Egyptian artisans have been assisted to attend such events (in Korca, Berat and Tirana) and present their craft and artworks that now are better designed and more marketable³⁴.

The project prepared and utilized a guidebook with 100 innovative ideas for self-employment.

This guide was introduced in three workshops with Roma and Egyptian youth and local stakeholders in each of the regions. Held respectively on the period of January - February, 2014 the workshops generated local debates on how Roma and Egyptian youth could utilize innovative ideas and develop feasible individual start up plans.

While the project was positioned to support such plans and creative initiatives, the project was also keen to share such plans with other specialized agencies for soliciting additional support which could be in advice or access to financial services and or institutions.

In these workshops, the project facilitated the engagement and presentations by successful social entrepreneurs, including also experts from Yunus Social Business, Albania (co-funded by Peace Nobel

³³ See Annex 4.3 Roma and Egyptian Artisans' Brochure;

³⁴ See Annex 4.4 Report on Training of Roma/Egyptian Artisans, Korca;

Laureate Professor Yunus). The workshops served to not only introduce innovative ideas for self-employment but also helped Roma and Egyptian youth to think more realistically about their income generation ideas and choose their potential partners. The workshops were organized in close collaboration with National Employment Service and their subordinated regional employment offices in three regions. These workshops represented a model that could be regularly applied by the concerned public authorities³⁵ that are responsible for assisting people to gain employment. Such method not only helped people to learn but also inspired them to find their own solutions and not become passive receivers of an assistance that may take long to result into a decent job.

SSIREC project has assisted overall 341 Roma and Egyptian job-seekers, entrepreneurs and artisans from three regions to explore self-employment and entrepreneurship potentials. A variety of trainings consisting in income generation, medicinal plant cultivation, as well as traditional and innovative vocational courses have been offered to beneficiaries in three regions. As part of the support, 110 Roma and Egyptian beneficiaries were assisted with preparation of individual investment start up plans and provision of toolkits (55 individuals were provided with sage seedlings, milling machines as well as harvesting tools; (55 individuals were assisted with startup kits in farming, cattle breeding, hairdressing, music performance, plumbing, sewing, car washing, crafting and trading).

Income-generation coaching and marketing support has been offered to Roma and Egyptian entrepreneurs in three regions. Support was extended to 38 Roma and Egyptian individuals, both graduates and skilled workers who benefited on the job training in public administration, local professional organizations, as well as construction companies. On the job training involved a variety of fields such as: coach for employment (4 individuals); facilitators in drafting local community development plans for Roma and Egyptians (6 individuals); young professionals assisting in drafting the Action Plan for Roma and Egyptian integration (2 individuals); Facilitators on protection from discrimination at the offices of PA and CPD (2 individuals); construction workers engaged in implementation of program infrastructure interventions (23 individuals); auxiliary nurse (1 individual)³⁶.

One important element that was key to the model was the coaching support provided to Roma and Egyptian individuals aiming to start up income generation activities. They were assisted to find out their strength and talent and use it to penetrate the market for generating income moving gradually to self-employment if the initiative proved to be profitable. Incubating self-employment involved the creation of possibilities to “plant seeds” and “grow seedlings” in a “seedling’s bed”. When the right market segment for products and services was found the “seedlings” would be uprooted from the bed and would be rooted more confidently in the market prepared to face the market forces. This approach was a strengths based approach that built on the entrepreneurship spirit and skills of the Roma and Egyptians who needed the support for starting up in a market that has been for a long time judgmental, exclusive and harsh for fragile start-ups especially these of marginalized communities such as Roma and Egyptians.

35 See Annex 4.5 Manual one Hundred Innovative ideas for self-employment

36 See Annex 4.6 Database on Beneficiaries of WP4

In addition the project provided career advice services; vocational courses, and on the job training, provision of start-up kits which prepare people for employment too. Marrying these preparations for employment with the efforts on income generation and linkages with other service providers was key to find solutions to issues of employment which are not easy to solve. While the achievements are yet to be fully seen, the methodology and approach has been highly embraced by Roma and Egyptians and it is appreciated by service providers who have understood the importance of collaboration and the mutual benefit that comes as a result.

In order to further sustain the income generation initiatives of Roma and Egyptian young entrepreneurs, the project enabled partnerships between beneficiaries and specialized local agencies such as Auleda and MedAlb Institute, with the view to sustain the assistance offered in income generation, even after the project closure. Project paid particular attention to the economic empowerment of Roma Egyptian women through provision of agricultural training and assistance in cultivating and marketing medicinal plants in three regions³⁷. During January – June 2015, the project provided further income-generation coaching and marketing support to Roma and Egyptian entrepreneurs. Additionally, the project compiled analysis on the incubation of self-employment and identified policy recommendations for their transition into matured income generation activities³⁸.

	Description	No. of beneficiaries
1	Total Beneficiaries on Job and Entrepreneurship Promotion*	341
2	Individual investment plans and income generation toolkits	110
	Sage seedlings and, milling and harvesting tools	55
	Startups (farming; cattle breeding; hairdressing; music performance; plumbing; sewing; car washing; crafting and trading)	55
3	Vocational courses	90
	course on medicinal plant cultivation	55
	Couse on camera operation, video assembling and news reporting	18
	hairdressing, aesthetics, cuisine, mechanic, barber, welder, and tailor	17
4	On the job-training	38
	Coach for employment	4
	Facilitators in drafting community development plans	6
	Young professionals assisting in drafting Action Plan for Roma/Egyptians	2
	Facilitators on Protection from Discrimination at PA and CPD	2
	Construction workers	23
	Auxiliary nurse	1
5	Artisan product design and marketing support	30
6	Career advice counselling on the job-promotion-program alone	103
*One person has benefited from more than one service/activity		

37 See Annex 4.7 Final Reports of Auleda and MedAlb

38 See Annex 4.8 Brochure on "Incubation of Income Generation Activities among groups facing disadvantages"

4.3 Promoting Employment

Since employment rate is a proxy indicator for social inclusion, the project intentionally supported the efforts of Roma and Egyptian people to gain employment. This was done through promotion of employment and self-employment³⁹. The employment of a number of young Roma and Egyptian professionals was considered important for both Roma and Egyptian people from one hand and Albanian society on the other as such experiences helped both groups to overcome the fears of unfamiliarity with each-other and understand that mutual respect takes the entire society a long way in ensuring coexistence with dignity for all. Hence, this report section includes an account of young people that got jobs, fellowships and opportunities to engage in the labor market. These may be small steps but the opportunities provided benefit the wider society while institutions started to change the patterns of employment in favor of diversity.

Such examples were promoted in the life of the project, because such cases encourage Roma and Egyptian children and their families to find value in education and embrace the opportunities to learn and grow as every other citizen in the Albanian society. Hence these are examples of hope and results of hard efforts that have paid off.

In addition to the employment of about 38 individuals mentioned above, the project trained and hired through Auleda 4 Roma and Egyptian individuals in the capacity of coaches for employment. Two coaches for employment were hired in Vlora and two others in Berat (two female two male), as part of the project team in providing self-employment coaching services to over 100 Roma and Egyptian peers. The Roma and Egyptian recruits were trained and benefited formal employment for one year with the aim to build employment capacities among Roma and Egyptian young professionals.

Additionally 6 out of 18 trained Roma and Egyptian young individuals from Korca, Berat and Vlora after being trained as journalists, camera operators and video producers were hired by Disutni Albania, (a Roma CSO in Korca) to prepare a program which was broadcasted on Albanian Public Television TVSH on bi-weekly basis. A job fair has been organized during 10-12 July 2013 in Korca where over 40 Roma and Egyptian individuals attended and applied for various employment opportunities. While such activity didn't lead to any employment for them, yet it helped to enhance capacities of Roma and Egyptian individuals to undergo job interviews and become familiar with labor market requirements⁴⁰.

Project has supported 2 Roma/Egyptian university graduates (a male and female) as Facilitators for Protection from Discrimination who were hosted as fellows respectively by Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination and People's Advocate. These individuals were trained and supported in a previous fellowship by OSCE/BPRI, an EU funded project and subsequently over one year by SSIREC project to consolidate their work experience which eventually increased their chances for permanent employment. Just toward the end of their terms at People's Advocate and Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination, the two fellows found

39 Self-employment is covered in section 4.2 of the report

40 See Annex 4.9 Report on Job Fair held in Korca

employment in two Roma CSOs respectively at Albanian Roma Union Amaro Drom and Disutni Albania, thus bringing greater knowledge and expertise in the Roma and Egyptian CSOs. Meanwhile, Project has received commitment of PA and CPD that such positions namely facilitator for protection from discrimination will be opened permanently at each institution respectively within 2015.

In order to enhance work experience of Roma Egyptian young professionals, the project engaged two law graduates to assist the ministerial working group in drafting the new Action Plan for Integration of Roma and Egyptian communities 2015-2020. Two Roma and Egyptian fellows worked closely with international and national experts and gained substantial experience in data analysis and policy design for social inclusion. Following this engagement, one of them got employed by the Association for the Social Support of Youth (ARSIS) and the other is working as a freelance consultant.

During the implementation of infrastructure interventions the project enabled some 23 Roma/Egyptian job-seekers to work as construction workers in Berat, Korca, Vlora and Tirana. More specifically they worked for construction of buildings (i.e. kindergarten, intercultural community centers, health care centers, and national transitory center for emergencies), roads, sewage and sports grounds, and thus gained experience in construction work. They got introduced to companies that could potentially hire them again in future civil works.

4.4 Monitoring and Recalibration of Support

The Roma and Egyptian employment and entrepreneurial assessment introduced earlier in the report, has served as a basis for the project to provide adequate and feasible support to Roma and Egyptian individuals taking into consideration realistically challenges and opportunities while ensuring that tangible results are met within the project life particularly in the area of job promotion and entrepreneurship. For sustained results in this challenging area, the Project has deemed necessary to facilitate partnerships between Roma and Egyptian community members and professional local service providers in each region.

The project has increasingly promoted employment of educated Roma and Egyptian young professionals in public administration and or in professional organizations.

Additionally, the project found that there is a need not only to link Roma and Egyptian job-seekers with local development agencies but also to address the surrounding ethnic sensitivities resulting from long-standing social prejudices against Roma and Egyptian identities. The creation of the enabling environment was a significant component to which employment promotion and other activities undertaken under this work package served to.

Moreover, the project implementation revealed the need to integrate the self-employment and income generation incubation model into the active labor market measures, addressing the specifics resulting from the profile of the target groups.

WP5. Providing support for the implementation of Roma Strategy and Decade Action Plan

5.1 Supporting the Social Inclusion Directorate at MoSWY

The project has provided assistance to the MoSWY in a number of aspects that influence Government actions and policy on social inclusion of Roma and Egyptian people. The following is a summary of the assistance provided by SSIREC accompanied with the articulation of outputs/results from this effort. June 2013 parliamentary elections resulted in the restructuring of several departments at MoSWY where the responsibilities of the Technical Secretariat on Roma have been taken over by the newly established Social Inclusion Directorate. During September 2012– June 2015, the Project assisted the Social Inclusion Directorate (formerly known as Technical Secretariat on Roma) to organize workshops with 15 local officials (5 from each of the regions where the project was implemented) on the pilot RomAlb monitoring and reporting system. These officials came from the Regional Councils and regional directorates of education, health, employment, social services. Their role is to enter data periodically in the system and to enable the regional authorities and Social Inclusion Directorate to monitor the progress towards objectives of social inclusion.

During February 2013, the project team provided advisory support to staff of the former Technical Secretariat on Roma for organizing two consultation workshops on the future of the Roma Decade beyond 2015. These workshops involved respectively, government institutions and Civil Society Organizations.

As a result, both government and civil society organizations provided their inputs on how the actions targeting Roma could be tailored after 2015. The consultation workshops stressed: a) the need for greater involvement and ownership of line ministries related to social inclusion measures on Roma and Egyptian communities, b) the pivotal role of Roma and Egyptian civil society to voice respective communities in decision-making and facilitate delivery of social services.

During the consultations participants agreed to utilize the lessons learned from the implementation of the Decade of Roma Inclusion to guide the follow up actions that each government including that of Albania, would take as part of the EU agenda for integration of Roma minority. Among the lessons learned was the need to go as local as possible and link the anticipated actions with relevant budgets at both local and central level.

Based on the operational conclusions of the high level seminar held during February 20-21 2014 in Tirana, SSIREC provided assistance to MoSWY for aligning the local policies on Social Inclusion of Roma with the EU 2020 platform for Roma integration. This process of alignment was carried out with the informed participation of Roma and Egyptian CSOs. The dialogue has continued and a new Action Plan for the Integration of Roma and Egyptians 2015-2020 is developed with the participation of civil society, local authorities and line

ministries. The project supported such process by enabling an international and national expert to provide the guidance needed, by enabling Roma and Egyptian CSOs to participate meaningfully in dialogue and planning process and finally by engaging two representatives of Roma and Egyptian young professionals. It is to be mentioned that the draft has been finalized and it is expected to get the approval of the Council of Ministers within 2015⁴¹.

The project has provided support for aligning the reporting and monitoring web-based system RomAlb with the new Action Plan indicators. 16 training sessions have been provided to 112 officials representing local and central institutions as per the priority areas of the action plan. The system is in line with the new Action Plan for Roma and Egyptian Integration 2015-2020 as an integral part of the National Social Inclusion Policy document. Each of the trained officials has been provided a user account in order to enter regularly data on the relevant indicators and thus enable respective ministries to monitor the implementation of the measures. As part of their training, officials from the MoSWY and contact points in line ministries had an additional training session with focus on partnership building with Roma and Egyptian CSOs in data collection and data validation, which was originally planned under the activity described at section 2.3 of this report. The MoSWY in collaboration with contact points in each concerned ministry is responsible for coordinating the functioning of the system and preparation of progress reports on the Action Plan for Roma and Egyptians Integration⁴². While regional staff are trained on the pilot RomAlb monitoring and reporting system which is in alignment with the new plan of action, the utilization of it has been pending the approval of the plan of action. The time of consultations and dialogue on the plan of action was used by project staff to facilitate meetings with Technical Sub-Committees on Roma in the regions of Vlora and Berat and build understanding and agreement with the regional authorities to periodically enter information. This issue has been thoroughly discussed and agreements for action were reached.

5.2 Supporting institutions responsible for protection from discrimination

The project played a crucial role in connecting the services offered by the Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination (CPD) and Roma and Egyptian communities. While such relations existed in the past, the project contributed intentionally to a practice according to which the institution spend time and effort to better understand the intricacies of life for Roma and Egyptian communities. The specific activities organized in the life of the project enabled both, the institution and the communities to develop bridges and patterns of communication that can easily be continued beyond the life of the project. The community outreach activities organized by the CPD were planned in March 2014 and are still on going. The focus of the outreach was to learn through dialogue and consultations about the status of Roma and Egyptians and to provide assistance to them on issues regarding protection from discrimination.

CPD with support of the project developed informative brochures published in both Albanian and Roma language. The CPD staff visited communities and played a crucial role in helping them learn how to address

41 See Annex 5.1 Draft Action Plan for the integration of Roma and Egyptian people

42 See Annex 5.2 Report on RomAlb Trainings

issues of discrimination. The mutual learning will continue beyond the life of the project given that both have the connections, the relations and the information needed to engage in problem solving or in promotion of protection from discrimination⁴³.

Six public events called “Open Days with the CPD” (two in each region) have been organized in Roma/Egyptian neighborhoods in Berat (February 6, 2014), Pogradec (February 13, 2014), Vlora (February 20, 2014) reaching over 150 people. These events consisted in three meetings with local stakeholders as well as three field visits in remote neighborhoods in respective regions, all of which contributed to raising awareness of communities on CPD services and relevant procedures.

In addition, the project developed a manual on legal procedures and actions on how to deal with claims of discrimination based on ethnicity with a special focus on Roma and Egyptians. This manual provided comprehensive guidelines to staff of the Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination (CPD). The manual underlines the legal framework, specific cases addressed by national and international courts, and policy and practice involving Roma and Egyptian issues⁴⁴.

In a parallel process, the CPD was assisted to update the standard complaint format as part of the devised feedback and complaint mechanism. The new standard complaint format was developed to be user friendly, keeping in mind the population groups such as Roma and Egyptians. The format developed is easy to fill/ provide the required information⁴⁵.

The project organized training sessions for CPD’ staff on the legal matters as well as community outreach strategies. The project staff helped with the organization of public events in respective regions serving as a catalyzer for other events, activities and interactions that benefited project participants. Informative flyer on services and relevant procedures for obtaining services of the CPD, tailored in a user-friendly language have been produced and shared widely in respective communities.

Technical advice was provided to People’s Advocate for drafting three legal amendments on social housing, transfer of residency as well as economic aid. The amendments have been widely consulted with Roma and Egyptian CSOs and were submitted to respective line ministries. The proposed amendments simplify key criteria for Roma and Egyptian individuals to access social housing, transfer of residence and benefit economic aid. Although the introduced amendments are expected to have a positive impact on the lives of Roma families at risk of evictions, yet they need to be followed by directives and informative campaigns in order to ensure their effective implementation⁴⁶.

As mentioned earlier in the report, the project has supported two Roma and Egyptian university graduates, as Facilitators for Protection from Discrimination for over a year hosted by the CPD and PA. Following such initiative, the two institutions saw the benefit of such fellowships while the fellows had a tremendous

43 See Annex 5.4 Community Outreach Plan

44 See Annex 5.3 Package on the right to protection from discrimination prepared for CPD

45 Ibid

46 See Annex 5.5 Legal Amendments on social housing, transfer of residency and economic aid proposed by People’s Advocate

learning experience. Staff in these institutions learned to respect the fellows and the fellows learned to assert themselves in institutional environments. While both institutions have committed to make the positions permanent in their structures and are working towards that, the fellows completed their terms and have found employment with CSOs.

WP6. Awareness Raising and Information Campaign

6.1 Preparation of the Communication Strategy and Action Plan

A Communication Strategy and Action Plan was prepared upon the commencement of the project in line with the EU visibility guidelines. This strategy aimed to increase awareness on the actions undertaken to enable social inclusion, combat discrimination and develop mutual appreciation for diversity.

The strategy based its work on a number of actions but the highlight of it was the establishment of a network of Goodwill Ambassadors for Cultural Diversity. The Goodwill ambassadors were prominent Albanian personalities from the areas of arts, sports and media. They served as role models and have been involved in project activities to convey strong messages on social inclusion and promote respect for cultural diversity. Actions envisaged in this strategy are accompanied by the slogan “you and me - Equal in Diversity”. Particular attention has been given to the recognition of ownership of partner institutions at central and local level⁴⁷.

Communication Strategy and Action Plan have served as a guide for communicating project results to beneficiaries, media and the general public. The involvement of successful Roma and Egyptian youth as Role Models and personalities influential in the wider public as Goodwill Ambassadors for Cultural Diversity has contributed towards greater awareness of the public on cultural diversity and it is believed (through some observed signs) that such strategy has affected the Roma and Egyptian as well as the wider public in their views/behavior towards social inclusion⁴⁸.

6.2 Implementing a national awareness and advocacy campaign

The launching of the project took place on July 11 2012 in Korca, and consisted in a artisans fair followed by a conference entitled Social Inclusion of Roma and Egyptian Communities with involvement of high representatives of MoSWY, EU Delegation, UNDP, local representatives from three regions as well as civil society organizations and activists and media representatives. As mentioned also in section 1.1 of this report, this event received particular media attention and set the ground for enhanced collaboration at all levels for implementing the project. Aiming to promote active citizenship and raise awareness on voluntarism, environment protection and human rights regular volunteer-involving activities (i.e. cleaning of territories, planting of trees in neighborhoods, school yards and other public places etc.) were undertaken by CCFs. Activities involved interactions among children, youth and parents coming from diverse cultural backgrounds,

⁴⁷ See Annex 6.1 SSIREC Communication Strategy

⁴⁸ Project evaluation may shed more light in relation to the effect of such activities.

contributing to greater recognition and appreciation of respective cultural identities.

The Project has produced three documentaries. The first, titled “Equal in Diversity” with interviews of Goodwill Ambassadors for Cultural Diversity and Roma/Egyptian role models. This documentary was broadcasted on National Public Television (TVSH) and widely disseminated in social media outlet. The second documentary titled “When Dreams Become Reality” was produced featuring a talented young Roma artist who was supported by the project for staging the “Les Miserables” drama. The third documentary titled “A Step towards Social Inclusion” featuring success stories from project interventions was broadcasted on prime time at Top Channel⁴⁹. Reflective discourses on effective approaches towards social inclusion of Roma and Egyptian communities took place on National Public Television on the occasion of International Roma Day respectively on April 8, 2013, 2014 and 2015. The shows featured SSIREC Project Manager, Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination, Head of Social Inclusion Department at MoSWY, People’s Advocate, Roma and Egyptian Civil society representative as well as Roma and Egyptian students and graduates and their non-Roma and Egyptian peers. The shows provided an excellent opportunity to bring forward a more realistic view of challenges and opportunities featuring an emerging generation of educated and successful Roma and Egyptian individuals.

These individuals and the groups they are part of, can and will become the voice of their own communities, enabling them to get organized, participate in decisions that affect their lives and improve access to public services, combat discrimination and while contributing to a culture of mutual respect and appreciation for differences.

Speaking of respect for differences, nine prominent personalities from the world of art, literature, academia and media were announced as Goodwill Ambassadors for Cultural Diversity in Albania. In three years of project implementation, their video messages, participation in events alongside Roma and Egyptian role models have echoed greater acceptance of Roma and Egyptians in the mainstream society. Such attention of distinguished personalities on the issues faced by Roma and Egyptians has improved the image of these groups portrayed in the media. As a result Roma are positively featured at comedies and talk shows in the country.

Nine Prominent Albanian Personalities announced as “Goodwill Ambassadors for Cultural Diversity”

- Mr. Zhani Ciko, Director of the Albanian Opera House;
- Ms. Arbana Osmani, Popular TV and radio host;
- Mr. Ermal Hasimja, Professor at New York University;
- Mr. Florian Kondi (known as Doctor Flori), Well known Albanian singer;
- Mr. Gazmend Paja, Comedian Actor;
- Mr. Kujtim Cashku, Film Producer;
- Mr. Marin Mema, Investigative journalist;
- Mr. Mina Qirici, Writer of several books on Roma culture;
- Mr. Pandi Laco, Writer and TV producer

⁴⁹ See Annex 6.2 Copies of three Documentaries on Roma/Egyptians

The announced personalities used their popularity and social status to reach diverse audiences and help influence decision makers, political leaders, and development partners to support the social inclusion agenda in the country.

A series of awareness raising activities were organized to mark the International Roma Day during 2013 2014 and 2015. Part of the commemorations were inter-cultural artisan fairs; a National Conference “Accurate Data – Relevant Policies” in the Framework of National Action Plan for the Decade of Roma Inclusion); Staging of the “Les Miserables” drama directed by Ram Hadroj an Albanian Roma university graduate and performed by Roma and Egyptian youth and students of arts at the University of Arts (April 2013); the exhibition “My Place” featuring installations and paintings of the Roma visual artist Sead Kazanxhiu, including a publication of a brochure containing the exhibited art works; musical festivals featuring both Roma and Egyptians and non-Roma and Egyptians musicians joining their voices (April 2014).

A concert entitled “Sounds of Cultural Diversity” was organized with participation of young Roma musicians performing alongside well known artists. Part of the event were a group of Roma children residing at the National Transitory Center for Emergencies who received music and life- skills training through project support and were enabled to perform on stage in Albanian and Romani language. (April 2015)

In addition, a training manual on cultural diversity reporting with a focus on Roma and Egyptian Communities has been produced in collaboration with the Media Institute and disseminated to over 100 journalists. Two training sessions have been organized with 53 young journalists who enhanced their skills on minority reporting with an exclusive focus on anti-discrimination, protection of human dignity and cultural diversity. Following the training a national contest on the best development story on Roma and Egyptian communities was organized and three reporters were awarded for their excellence in reporting diversity⁵⁰. Success stories and lessons learned from project’s interventions have been showcased in various media and communication channels throughout project implementation.

- 3 documentaries (“Equal in Diversity”; “When Dreams Become Reality; A step toward social inclusion”) have been produced and broadcasted in TVSH and Top Channel;
- 3 TV shows highlighting various project initiatives have been broadcasted. These programs involved not only Roma and Egyptian beneficiaries but also representatives of key institutions such as Minister of Social Welfare and Youth, People’s Advocate and Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination. For greater outreach such programs have been broadcasted on internationally marked days.

Following Project negotiations with the National Albanian Television (TVSH) and Disutni Albania (a Roma CSO in Korca producing Roma TV programs) it was agreed to broadcast bi-weekly for the first time a program in Romani language. The first broadcast in TVSH started on December 26, 2013 in Roma language with Albanian subtitles. This program is regularly disseminated also via YouTube.

⁵⁰ See Annex 6.3 Manual on Cultural Diversity Reporting

Roma and Egyptian CSOs, students and activists from all over the country were consulted on the Post 2015 Development Agenda as part of the Global Consultation process in several countries of the world (Albania is one of 70 countries selected) to design new development priorities after 2015 following the Millennium Development Goals. The consultations organized across the country under the motto “The Future We want” was of a global consultations which aimed to build consensus between people, communities, cities, countries stakeholders and groups that usually don’t participate in multilateral negotiations. They were enabled to express their views on key development priorities. Several Roma and Egyptian youth and community members were part of these discourses on issues related to youth employment, environment and social inequalities.

The staging of “Les Miserables” drama by Roma/Egyptian students along with students of the University of Arts was an innovative means of promoting cultural values of Roma/Egyptian communities as well as preservation and development of their identities as an integral part of the national cultural heritage. An impressive part of the drama was the manner in which Roma culture and tradition were made present. The director had incorporated not only Roma music but also other elements such as traditional Roma costumes.

Eight quarterly newsletters have been prepared in Albanian, English and Roma language (Romane), highlighting active involvement and examples of empowered Roma and Egyptian individuals in setting local development agendas in various regions.

Various communication channels, both in print and electronic media have highlighted the impact on the project in introducing an innovative approach to social inclusion of Roma and Egyptian communities and appreciation for cultural diversity⁵¹. The project team arranged site visits in intervention areas in three regions with 12 journalists representing well-known media sources in the country. They had a chance to meet Roma and Egyptian farmers, artisans, and other individuals. In addition they visited infrastructure investments done in areas inhabited by Roma and Egyptian communities. Through such an experience journalists were able to witness the impact project had on the everyday life of the communities. Following their visits several daily papers wrote stories portraying promising images of Roma and Egyptian communities⁵².

To mark the closure of the project, a conference entitled “Advancing social inclusion of Roma and Egyptians Communities” was organized on June 12, 2015 in Tirana. The conference brought together some 80 participants, national and local stakeholders involved with project implementation as well as project beneficiaries. Following the presentation of results and testimonies were shared by Roma and Egyptian beneficiaries present in the conference. Participants attended three thematic working groups identifying effective practices, lessons learned and actions for the future as Albania continues its journey towards social inclusion. The working groups also focused on three important subjects relevant to interventions undertaken by SSIREC project, namely: a) Incubation of self-employment and income generation; b) Voicing Roma and Egyptians Civil Society and Fostering Active Citizenship; c) Participatory Governance for Social Inclusion.

⁵¹ See Annex 6.4 Newsletters, fast facts and promotional items

⁵² See Annex 6.5 Successful Stories of Roma and Egyptian individuals in media

This event contributed to an in-depth discourse around issues of social inclusion and the necessary future actions to continue the work that has already started in Albania⁵³. All project achievements and lessons learned are featured in a user friendly brochure which raises awareness of the public at large on positive models in the area of social inclusion of Roma and Egyptian communities.

⁵³ See Annex 6.6 Report on the Action Closure event

RISKS, COUNTER MEASURES, AND WAYS FORWARD

Risks and Countermeasures

Project team has been cautious about identification and mitigation of risks by implementing respective countermeasures. The project identified ways to address the delays in the start-up phase and found ways to make progress even in the times of political changes due to parliamentary elections. The project was implemented with flexibility, recalibrating its actions based on expert opinions and recommendations. The example of this is incubating self-employment and income generation initiatives.

Risk 1. Delays in staff recruitment and setting up offices in the regions, preparation and signing of a number of MoUs with respective local authorities as per the number of intervention areas within three selected regions. Countermeasure 1: Project Management assessed the relevance of delayed activities and reflected that in the annual planning. Whenever possible the action was simplified and activities were grouped in compliance with agreed requirements and keeping in mind that output quality was preserved. The revisions were reflected in the annual plan and were implemented in due time.

Risk 2: Benefits of formalization of Roma/Egyptian small businesses were not deemed sufficient to cover the costs of business registration. In case a member of the family registers a small business, the whole family is removed from the list of beneficiaries of economic aid with no prospects of getting back in if the business does not succeed. The economic situation has been subject to changing conditions which made the development of business activities more difficult. The preliminary findings of the employment and entrepreneurship assessment stressed that registration of newly set up Roma and Egyptian income-generation activities may not survive the competition, while threatening the Roma and Egyptian (small traders and artisans) with being cut off economic aid.

Countermeasure 2: The project assessed and monitored regularly the economic situation in three regions, providing additional support as needed in order to adapt to circumstances of the concerned Roma and Egyptian individuals. As concluded at the assessment, project recalibrated its support to incubating self-employment and small income-generation activities rather than pushing towards their premature formalization. The project helped with networking Roma and Egyptian self-employed and entrepreneurs with local professional agencies in order to ensure smooth and matured transformation from incubation to formalization of the income generation activities.

Risk 3: Parliamentary elections of June 2013 were expected to slow down the process of project implementation, due to potential political changes in the administration responsible for social inclusion. These changes posed the risk of the new administration lacking the previous knowledge of the ongoing processes

focusing on Roma and Egyptians.

Countermeasure 3: After parliamentary elections UNDP programme staff established contacts with the newly appointed officials of central government and succeeded to update them with the information they needed on the work done thus far with the project. Additionally the staff managed to renew the commitment of the respective Local Governments units in project regions to continue the cooperation in the frame of the project to jointly contribute to the set objectives.

Risk 4: From the start the project team considered the risk of certain Roma and Egyptian Communities not being open to dialogue and as a result not collaborate in the project. Another foreseen risk was the openness of the Albanian society and representatives of authorities who were found to have a biased and negative image of Roma and Egyptian people. The marginalization of Roma and Egyptian Communities in Albania and the fact that they are perceived as second-class citizens was considered a risk that could hamper project efforts towards social inclusion of Roma and Egyptian communities.

Countermeasure 4: Close collaboration with Roma and Egyptian CSOs and other community based organizations operating at local level and the involvement of Roma/Egyptian individuals in the project team has resulted to be instrumental in ensuring the dialogue with, and involvement of all Roma and Egyptian groups concerned. The image of Roma and Egyptian people was addressed regularly through the communication strategy and every small opportunity to influence the society for challenging that image and replacing it with new positive images was taken and built upon. Lastly the use of the prominent figures to promote the identities of Roma and Egyptian people was instrumental to work around issues of acceptance and respect for diversity.

Other challenges

The political changes deriving from parliamentary elections of June 2013 have resulted in changes and restructuring of MoSWY where the Technical Secretariat on Roma no longer exists. Instead, the Social Inclusion Directorate resumed the monitoring of the National Action Plan of Roma Decade and was assigned to coordinate the work for developing a new Action Plan for Roma and Egyptians Integration, aligned with EU platform for Roma integration 2020. Whereas this is a positive development, it has hampered the full operationalization of RomAlb data reporting system and the functioning of the regional committees on assessment of social needs and their subordinated Technical Sub-committee on Roma issues. The project provided expertise to MoSWY to adjust the integration of RomAlb system as per the newly agreed set indicators. The project trained some 112 staff operating at local and central levels of government units. With the finalization of the new Action Plan for Roma and Egyptian, the MoSWY and the government have taken a significant role and responsibility for achieving the plan's objectives.

Changes introduced in implementation

In order to adjust project activities with the new developments in the country and as per the actual needs and potentials of targeted communities, project activities have been duly recalibrated.

Such recalibration has been validated by the Project Management Committee, reflecting also the recommendations of the Results-Oriented-Monitoring (ROM) reports. The following is a list of changes undertaken:

The project extended its duration at no additional costs till 30 June 2015 (six months) in order to allow the project team to complete the remaining activities;

A part of Work Package 4, the team assessed the assistance provided by the project in terms of self-employment and income-generation to identify strategies and action steps for smooth transitioning from incubation to formalization.

The project team provided support under WP5 to MoSWY for preparing the Action Plan for Roma and Egyptian Integration, thus aligning national social inclusion policies with EU's 2020 platform for Roma integration. The RomALB data reporting system was updated and integrated as part of the Action Plan, both to become operational after the expected approval by the council of ministers by end of 2015. Its operationalization involved adjustments of the indicators in line with the new Action plan as well as relevant training and IT assistance to some 112 officials from involved institutions at central and local level.

The project constantly dealt with mitigation of risks and implemented with the phase out in mind. The intensive work with Roma and Egyptian CSOs, consideration (whenever relevant) of the involvement of qualified Roma and Egyptian individuals in the implementation of project activities, the transfer of knowledge respectively to LGs and Roma and Egyptian CSOs were part of the preparation for exit.

An additional infrastructure priority was identified and requested by Local Government and Roma and Egyptian CCFs in Korca. Project budget under the infrastructure component allowed for implementation of this new priority, thus, making 10 the total project interventions in infrastructure in three regions. In order to ensure sustainability of project's interventions and also in response to emergent situation resulting from flooding in certain areas (i.e. Pogradec and Novosela) additional volume of civil works was implemented.

Further, as per the joint assessment of the State Social Service and project team, additional civil works were implemented for operationalization of the national transitory center for emergencies in Shtish-Tufina.

Under WP4, constant monitoring revealed the need for additional coaching and tool kits to Roma and

Egyptian farmers and other entrepreneurs to ensure successful marketing of their products and services. All such assistance was successfully extended till June 2015.

Under WP6, given the extended timeline of the project till end June 2015, there was need for an additional cultural event in commemoration of International Roma Day. To this end, the Project organized a concert entitled “Sounds of Cultural Diversity” with participation of young Roma musicians performing alongside well known artists. Part of the event was a group of Roma children residing at the National Transitory Center for Emergencies.

LESSONS LEARNED

Social inclusion of Roma and Egyptian communities often was not viewed as a priority by local authorities. In several cases, relevant national priorities were not fully observed and responded to, at local level. SSIREC worked with both, local and central government and helped to facilitate the dialogue and learning at both levels on issues of social inclusion that affected the target group of the project. The effect of such work was observed in the improved collaboration between the local and central government in both planning and budgeting actions targeted to Roma and Egyptian communities. They started to implement and monitor the relevant policies that affected the lives of Roma and Egyptian people in the three project covered regions.

Projects focused on Social Inclusion need to facilitate the collaboration between various government units. Such projects serve as important means to bring different government units at different level together. The projects provide the window of opportunity to increase understanding of these entities on population groups in need and issues they face. The target group(s) have been constantly and consistently excluded from the mainstream hence service providers and duty bearers know little about their customs, their culture, mentality and the specific issues they face.

While at this point in the journey of social inclusion, the projects need to facilitate their collaboration and help them get to know the target group better, with time, the government units need to be held accountable for the way they collaborate in the interest of the most vulnerable groups they serve and the way they implement policies regarding social inclusion.

The improvement of infrastructure through participatory planning , increases understanding of Roma and Egyptian people about the role of public institutions and makes Roma and Egyptian people more aware of their entitlements and the way to use the right channels for demanding and receiving public services. In this process they also learn how to become part of dialogues for future planning. It is through such activities that they act as citizens and take part in decisions that affect their lives.

The development and alignment of the Community Development Plans (CDPs) in each local unit with nationally decided priorities such as National Action Plan of Roma Decade, are a significant contribution of SSIREC. So is the awareness and citizenship demonstrated by Roma and Egyptian community members, activists and CSOs that have engaged with the public institutions for the development and implementation of Community Development Plans.

Specific activities may be of help to bring some improvement, increase self-confidence and provide people with learning opportunities. The key to longer term engagement and success stands in carefully crafted, negotiated and agreed plans between, the groups and duty bearers. These plans are the foundation of continues dialogue and the basis for the future advocacy of target groups to ensure that

public services are provided to them.

Linking such plans with the National Action Plan for Roma and Egyptian Inclusion is another step to link local development with national commitments which get monitored and reported against. SSIREC helped to learn that such linkages are key for the continuation of the efforts on Social Inclusion.

Despite the fact that there was no formal commitment of Local Government Units for financial contribution expressed in the Description and Budget of the Action, the project team has encouraged the Local government to allocate a financial contribution of approximately 20% for all CUP investments taking place in the territory under their jurisdiction. Though most of the Local Government agreed to contribute financially for the completion of CUP, for some of the Local government units the financial contribution was not possible due to serious budget constraints. To make up for such constraints Local Government Units have contributed in kind for completing and operationalization of infrastructure interventions. This is an indication of their intentionality to serve and provide. Additionally it is a sign of the change that took place in these entities in the life of the project

SSIREC experience indicates to all these intending to work on social inclusion that service providers walk the extra mile to provide what is needed when they open their hearts and minds to see the poverty and the sufferings of socially excluded groups. Awareness about their situation and understanding that these groups are eager to collaborate for improving their own situation are important factors that lead to commitments and actions. Hence, key to success is helping the service providers to understand that their assistance is needed and crucial to the lives of these groups.

The findings of the employment and entrepreneurship assessment report stressed that registration of newly set up Roma and Egyptian economic activities in the form of a business would be a barrier to success especially because these activities could not stand the initial competition and the tax burden. This was considered a huge threat for Roma and Egyptian (small traders and artisans) as they would lose the economic aid and its accompanying benefits leaving them without the minimum needed support. Given the learning from the recommendations of the assessment, the SSIREC recalibrated its assistance

Taking the time to understand the recommendations of specialists and keep the project open to recalibration is a big learning derived from SSIREC. Other projects engaging with socially excluded groups need to consider carefully what can and can't work as they plan their interventions on employment and economic development. Additionally they need to be intentional to apply "do no harm" principles in future interventions.

Incubation of self-employment and income-generation was the new direction of the intervention. It built on the entrepreneurial spirit and past experience of Roma and Egyptian people which was a recognized strength to start with.

Enabling Roma and Egyptian entrepreneurs to develop their businesses in the conditions of incubation was an intentionality of SSIREC to help them work under special conditions that would allow them to develop their business ideas, identify the market segment that needed their services and products and start small by approaching the market with small income generation activities as tests for a bigger business development later. Such practice served to enable entrepreneurs to gain the needed confidence and create some preconditions for their activities to be removed later from the incubation to facing the market.

Project efforts helped them to improve household provisions while they learned about the market, built their confidence and overcame the barriers of acceptance in the market. This intervention was important for creating a favorable environment for these new entrepreneurs to succeed.

The incubation of self-employment and income generation was a test in itself and it was done in addition to other traditional prior interventions such as provision of vocational training, registration with the employment offices, doing on the job learning through subsidized employment schemes etc. But since such traditional measures had not shown the desired effect, testing new opportunities was seen as imperative.

SSIREC provides an example for other projects to adapt the intervention to the needs and conditions of the target group. This intervention has some initial success stories to share, but there are other dependencies that affect the final success. It is of value to follow up on the intervention and assess its success after one year from the closure of SSIREC and identify clearly the other dependencies. Other projects and policy makers working on employment and economic development of socially excluded groups would benefit significantly from such assessment.

The SSIREC model would be of value to the employment services to consider adjusting their programs to the profile and potential of Roma and Egyptian job-seekers and entrepreneurs and thus facilitating (regularly and in a sustainable manner) their access to labor market.

An exclusive focus on Roma and Egyptian vulnerability and non-discrimination is often increasing stigma and marginalization of these communities. In response, the project focused more on the promotion of positive models and appreciation of Roma and Egyptians identities, which in turn have contributed to diminishing the stereotypes and creating more acceptance and inclusion. Portraying another image for Roma and Egyptians through the organization of socio-intercultural events, as well as communicating joint messages by Roma and Egyptian role models and Goodwill Ambassadors for Cultural Diversity has contributed to greater awareness of the public and acceptance of Roma and Egyptian identities in the mainstream society.

Learning from SSIREC indicates that interventions affecting socially excluded groups can be easily adding on the labeling of such groups. Hence special attention should be given to the terminology utilized not only by other projects but by all these that work to contribute to social inclusion.

Another important learning from SSIREC is that both the socially excluded and the wider society need to be targeted in order to build the bridges that will lead to increased interactions, collaboration and finally in social inclusion. Both the excluded groups and the wider society have their own perceptions and these need to be tackled in creative ways. Models used by SSIREC worked and may be utilized by others in the future.

The involvement of qualified Roma and Egyptian individuals in public administration, and as part of local professional agencies has better linked respective communities with service providers. In this respect, the project encouraged Roma and Egyptian University graduates and experienced and low-skilled workers to become part of various service delivery teams (in public administration, in civil society organizations and private companies) in three regions. This approach led to greater self-sufficiency amongst Roma and Egyptian communities, thus reflecting another dimension of social inclusion in the country. There is still way to go but the movement has already started and it is hard to stop it.

The experience from SSIREC helps to draw the learning that social inclusion can be facilitated also by creating opportunities for Roma and Egyptian to join the public administration and thus influence policies, practices, provision of services. Such efforts will create the space for civil servants from whichever population groups to get to know each other, their culture, tradition, values and learn together to provide services in non-discriminatory manner. This practice needs to continue for social inclusion to take place.

PARTNERS, COOPERATION AND VISIBILITY

Partners, Cooperation, collaboration and coordination

Continuous cooperation, coordination and collaboration in implementing project activities took place in the life of SSIREC. Partner organizations and mandated institutions targeting Roma and Egyptian and their social inclusion were constantly brought together. The complexity of the issues faced and addressed were such so that a project team could not cope to address them alone. Additionally, in order to multiply the efforts, to learn, to improve and to ensure that the practice continued beyond SSIREC, it was necessary to bring other partners along to join the efforts. SSIREC staff served as brokers to enable these other organizations, social groups, entities and institutions to create the necessary social network needed to gradually create a movement for social inclusion of Roma and Egyptian people in the country.

In this regard, the Project has regularly cooperated with other EU funded Actions including OSCE/ODIHR Best Practices for Roma Integration (BPRI); Council of Europe's Projects on Roma Mediators, and Inclusive Education and Minority Protection, as well as other smaller projects implemented by local CSOs (i.e. Help for Children Foundation, SHKEJ, and Vlora Youth Center).

Additionally, the Project cooperated with local professional service providers such as, Auleda and MedAlb Institute in providing job training and entrepreneurship services to Roma/Egyptian job-seekers, potential entrepreneurs and women farmers. This has been done with the intention to create linkages between such entities and community members, activists, social groups and CSOs in Roma and Egyptian communities. It is through linkages, networks and established relations that Roma and Egyptian entrepreneurs will continue to strengthen their small income generation activities and will receive information and support on how to best approach the market in the country. Hence project benefits will continue to exist beyond the life of SSIREC. Auleda manages a guarantee fund which may help successful Roma and Egyptian individuals to access micro credits for income-generation activities after SSIREC's closure. Similarly, MedAlb offers on regular basis assistance on farming and cultivation of medicinal plants which may benefit Roma and Egyptian successful women farmers following the support they received through SSIREC.

The partnering with local professional service providers relied on the relevant expertise that such entities provided locally and on their potential for future collaboration with project participants, social groups, and Roma and Egyptian CSOs for sustaining the impact of the project beyond its timeline.

The project was sensitive to the repeated eviction cases of Roma families. It was during the time of pressure and urgency that the project took on a very important role and provided advice and technical assistance to MoSWY (and to former MoLSAEO) for establishing and operationalizing the National Transitory Center for Emergencies in Shtish-Tufina. SSIREC project suggested to MoSWY mid and long term measures for the

integration of involved Roma families. Such relationship was significant for both SSIREC and MoSWY and consultations continued in the life of the project having a ripple effect on the work results of both SSIREC and MoSWY.

MONITORING AND CONTROL

The implementation of the project activities has been monitored through various means:

- Regular contacts of the project management with the EUD representatives.
- Five Project Management Committee meetings.
- On the spot visits by an EUD external monitor with relevant and follow up meetings.
- Two EUD managed ROM (Result Oriented Monitoring) missions with on the spot visits.

The project developed a phase out strategy which clearly outlined risk mitigation and served as a guiding document to ensure sustainability of the achieved results. The phase out strategy focused on the sustainability, scalability, and replication of various interventions carried out and/or modeled by the project⁵⁴.

The transfer of knowledge, the capacity building and establishment of links between the various actors participating in the project was of key importance for the phase out strategy. To this phase out strategy contributed the guidelines, the manuals and all other materials published through the project. These documents provide the needed documentation and reference materials that project participants can utilize in the future in the absence of support from SSIREC. On the other hand the links and relations established in the life of SSIREC between the various actors served to enable project participants to connect again and collaborate without the need for a broker such as SSIREC. The important preconditions are in place for such collaborative relations to implement future Action Plans, to continue the dialogues, to monitor and report on the progress for work that will be done for social integration in the country.

During June – July 2015 the project was evaluated by a team of international and national experts. The evaluation process served to collect information on project activities and results via all project reports and documents, site visits in intervention areas, interviews and focus groups with beneficiaries, meetings with local and central government counterparts and the involved CSOs. The evaluation team analyzed the intervention's relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability. The evaluation acknowledged the significant contribution of the project activities in narrowing the institutional gap in addressing the social inclusion of Roma and Egyptian communities in several areas such as participatory planning and strengthening civil society underlining that the continues engagement of all involved parties is key towards ensuring sustainability particularly in relation to job promotion and income generation⁵⁵.

⁵⁴ See Annex 7 Project phase-out Strategy;

⁵⁵ See Annex 8 Project Evaluation Report

ANNEXES

I. Project Management:

- 1.1 Financial Report July 2012 – June 2015
- 1.2 Progress vs. Objectives Matrix July 2012 – June 2015
- 1.3 Work Plan for July 2012 – June 2015
- 1.4 Project Management Committee Meetings (five) July 2012 – February 2015
 - 1. Minutes (En);
 - 2. Agenda (En);
 - 3. Presentation (En)

II. Technical Reports, Studies, as per WPs

WP2: Participatory Planning and Infrastructure Development

- 2 Three Regional Profiles for Korca, Berat and Vlora
 - 2.1 SSIREC Inception Report 2012
 - 2.2 Community Mobilization and Self-help Activities in three Regions
 - 2.3 Terms of Reference for Technical Regional Committee on Roma (TRCR)
 - 2.4 Reports on local workshops
 - 2.5 MoUs with Local Government Units in Three regions
 - (1) Korca Municipality
 - (2) Progradec Municipality
 - (3) Starove Commune
 - (4) Berat Municipality
 - (5) Berat Regional Council
 - (6) Otlak Commune
 - (7) Vlora Municipality
 - (8) Novosela Commune
 - (9) Shushica Commune
 - (10) Vlora Regional Council
 - 2.6 Final Report on Preparation of Community Development Plans
 - 2.7 Community Development Plans for three regions
 - 2.8 Manual on Participatory Planning and Budgeting for LGs
 - 2.9 Operational Guidelines for Intercultural Community Centers
 - 2.10 Project Fiches for Prioritized Infrastructure projects
 - (1) Kindergarten and School Library in Novosela
 - (2) Kindergarten-Health Center-Intercultural Community Center in Berat

- (3) Intercultural Community Center and Sports Ground in Korca
- (4) Intercultural Community Center in Pogradec
- (5) Road Rehabilitation in Shushica
- (6) Road Rehabilitation in Otlak
- (7) Road Rehabilitation in Partizani Neighborhood, Vlora
- (8) Road Rehabilitation in Pogradec
- (9) Rehabilitation of National Transitory Center for Emergencies
- (10) Rehabilitation of Neighborhood Square in Korca
- (11) Photos before and after intervention

2. 11 Transitory Centre for Emergencies approval and functioning package

WP 3: Capacities of Roma/Egyptian CSOs

- 3.1 Capacity and Training Assessment Report on Roma and Egyptian CSOs
- 3.2 Report on Training and Coaching Program provided to Roma and Egyptian CSOs
- 3.3 Training modules adjusted and utilized for Roma and Egyptian CSOs
- 3.4 Packages for three calls for proposals
 - (1) Call for Proposal and Guidelines (AL)
 - (2) Application Form (AL)
 - (3) Budget Form (AL)
 - (4) Self-Declaration for Belonging to Roma/Egyptian Communities
 - (5) Partnership Declaration
 - (a, b, c) Selection Reports
 - (a, b, c) Summary of Applications
- 3.5 Eighteen Final Report of CSOs
- 3.6 CSOs Monitoring and Coaching Report

WP4: Job and Entrepreneurship Promotion

- 4.1 Job and Entrepreneurship Assessment on Roma and Egyptian communities
 - 4.2 Activity Reports for Regional Workshops on Roma and Egyptian Employment
 - (1) Vlora Report;
 - (2) Berat Report;
 - (3) Korca Report;
 - 4.3 Roma and Egyptian Artisans' Brochure;
 - 4.4 Report on Training of Roma/Egyptian Artisans, Korca;
 - (1) Training Report
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- (2) Agenda
- (3) Presentation
- 4.5 Manual one Hundred Innovative ideas for self-employment
- 4.6 Database on Beneficiaries of WP4;
- 4.7 Final Reports of Auleda and MedAlb
- 4.8 Brochure on “Incubation of Income Generation Activities among groups facing disadvantages”
- 4.9 Report on Job Fair held in Korca

WP5: Supporting Implementation of National Roma Decade Action Plan

- 5.1 Draft Action Plan for the integration of Roma and Egyptian people
- 5.2 Report on RomAlb Trainings
- 5.3 Package on the right to protection from discrimination prepared for CPD
- 5.4 Community Outreach Plan
- 5.5 Legal Amendments on social housing, transfer of residency and economic aid proposed by People’s Advocate

WP 6: Visibility and Communication

- 6.1 SSIREC Communication Strategy
 - 6.2 Copies of three Documentaries on Roma/Egyptians
 - (1) Equal in Diversity
 - (2) When dreams become reality
 - (3) A step towards social inclusion
 - 6.3 Manual on Cultural Diversity Reporting
 - 6.4 Newsletters, fast facts and promotional items
 - 6.5 Successful Stories of Roma and Egyptian individuals in media
 - 6.6 Report on the Action Closure event
 - 7 Project phase-out Strategy
 - 8 Project Evaluation Report
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PROGRESS vs. OBJECTIVES MATRIX

	Intervention logic	Objectively verifiable indicators of achievement	To date progress (July 2012 –June 2015)	Follow up comments
Overall objective	Contribute to the social economic and political empowerment of Roma/Egyptian people in Albania	Positive assessment of progress made by the Government of Albania in the realisation of the rights of disadvantaged minorities (i.e. Roma and Egyptians)	EU progress reports of October 2013 and 2014 call for greater attention and efforts towards minority protection and specifically on respect for human rights, antidiscrimination policies and property rights of Roma and Egyptians in Albania. Annual Progress Report 2015 – Albanian Contribution Input 1 covering the period of September 2014 – May 2015 acknowledged the SSIREC contribution for aligning country's social inclusion policies with EU platform for Roma integration, highlighting the actual impact in various areas including participatory planning and self-employment.	The programme introduced a few successful models in participatory planning and infrastructure development, civil society engagement, diversification of sources of income (applying an innovative incubation model for self-employment), harmonisation of central and local social inclusion policies as well as a greater acceptance and access to social and public services. All such models constitute a solid base for extending and up- scaling country's efforts towards equal social and economic inclusion of Roma/Egyptian communities.
Specific objective	Improvement of social inclusion of disadvantaged Roma/Egyptian communities in Albania	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increased number of Roma/Egyptian women and men benefiting from community projects, becoming active in the labour market and self-employment activities; - Positive assessment of progress made by the Government of Albania in realisation of the rights of Roma/Egyptian communities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Mobilization of Community Counselling Forums (CCFs) with active and balanced involvement of Roma/Egyptian men and women; implementation of self-help and awareness raising activities; drafting of Roma/Egyptian community development plans; training of Roma/Egyptian CSOs and provision of small grants; infrastructure rehabilitation; self-employment and entrepreneurial assistance; as well as support provided to social inclusion and anti-discrimination institutions at local and central level, constitute significant steps towards empowerment and social integration of Roma/Egyptian in Albania. - Government programme on social inclusion 2013-2020 and subsequent policy reforms have been guided to a significant extend by project studies and analysis. For example, the Assessment of Roma/Egyptian Employment and Entrepreneurship challenges and opportunities, Training Needs Assessment of Roma/Egyptian CSOs, Web-based Reporting System- RomAlb, a multi-sectorial Needs Assessment Study on Rom/Egyptian Communities in Albania, several Policy Briefs in the areas of equal education, employment, housing and health as well as three Regional Profiles on Roma/Egyptian communities residing in Korca, Vlora and Berat, have all served as reference for preparing and guiding the implementation of measures targeting Roma/Egyptian communities. 	-Programme has taken particular care in ensuring local ownership and sustainability of achieved results through close partnership with MoSWY and respective LGs.

Expected results	1. Increased participatory local planning materialized is seven to nine community upgrading projects. Those projects will be identified and prioritized by local Roma/Egyptian communities and implemented at local level. (WP2)	At least 9 community development projects identified by the local communities and implemented in a suitable manner and fully operational.	<p>Profile of the situation of Roma and Egyptians in three intervention regions has been compiled guiding the work of the programme while serving to LG planning and monitoring processes;</p> <p>The empowering approach utilized by the programme has introduced an active citizenship trend amongst Roma and Egyptian community members. Roma/Egyptian communities are mobilized in Community Counselling Forums (CCFs) and enabled to participate in local prioritization and budget-planning processes.</p> <p>Infrastructure interventions (i.e. kindergarten, healthcare, community intercultural centres, road rehabilitation etc) prioritized by Roma/Egyptian CCFs and implemented by Programme with co-funding from LGs in Korca, Berat and Vlora, have improved the quality of life and enabled access to services;</p> <p>Roma and Egyptian priorities have become an integral part of the local development agenda through adoption and implementation of local Roma/Egyptian Community Development Plans, drafted with involvement of LGs, CCFs, planning experts as well as Roma/Egyptian local experts;</p> <p>Roma/Egyptian CSOs have been supported to sustain the functioning of the CCFs and thus give greater voice to Roma/Egyptian communities in participatory planning and budgeting processes organized regularly by LG authorities in three regions;</p> <p>LG officials in three regions have increased their commitment and intensified efforts to better respond to Roma/Egyptian needs.</p>	<p>All completed infrastructure interventions have been handed over to respective LGs. Particular attention has been paid to intercultural community centres, kindergarten and healthcare centres, all of which have been accompanied with guidance on their functioning and maintenance.</p> <p>Programme implemented an additional infrastructure intervention for establishing the National Transitory Center for Emergencies in Shtish-Tufina, Tirana, and making 10 the total number of infrastructure projects implemented.</p> <p>Sustaining participatory planning at local level requires continual commitments of all involved parties such as LG, Central government as well as CSOs.</p>
	2. Capacity of civil society organizations to combat discrimination increased, and their participation in national and international support schemes supported. (WP3)	<p>-Increased knowledge and expertise of civil society organizations' members in Roma/Egyptian communities on human rights, relevant policies and mechanisms to promote these rights (based on training needs assessment of civil society organizations) and other relevant programs.</p> <p>-Number of Roma/Egyptian CSOs advocacy actions to promote rights of the Roma/Egyptian population (baseline-very limited number of actions at the community level).</p>	<p>- Capacities of Roma/Egyptian CSOs have been enhanced through a comprehensive training and coaching programme followed by small grants to implement local community development initiatives and partner with consolidated non-Roma/Egyptian organizations.</p> <p>-Overall 18 advocacy actions (15 implemented by Roma/Egyptian CSOs and 3 implemented jointly with non-Roma/Egyptian CSOs) have been supported by programme in the areas of pre-school education, civil registration, income-generation, environmental protection etc.</p>	<p>Greater networking and collaboration with regional Roma/Egyptian CSOs is considered to be an important step for further consolidating the institutional capacities of local Roma/Egyptian CSOs</p> <p>Self-sustainment of the CSOs remains a challenge in the country particularly affecting Roma and Egyptians CSOs whose constituencies face additional barriers.</p>

	<p>3. Increased income generation by newly established as well as reinforced pre-existing businesses run by Roma/Egyptians. (WP4)</p>	<p>--Number of self-employment/income-generation activities started since the beginning of the projects (at least 20);</p> <p>-Sustainability of existing businesses ensured through viable business plans and thorough selection process;</p> <p>-Number of youth receiving vocational training (at least 60).</p>	<p>- Over all 341 Roma and Egyptian job-seekers, entrepreneurs and artisans from three regions have benefited vocational course and entrepreneurial support. As part of the assistance 110 Roma and Egyptians individuals became self-employed and/or generate income as a result of programme assistance.</p> <p>- A guide manual on 100 innovative ideas for self - employment has been developed accompanied with practical business plans templates has been utilized by concerned Roma/Egyptian beneficiaries;</p> <p>-Vocational courses (90), on the job training (38), income generation assistance (110), artisan product design and marketing support (30).</p> <p>-The remaining 103 Roma/Egyptian individuals received career advice counselling on the job promotion programs.</p> <p>In order to further sustain the income generation initiatives of Roma/Egyptian young entrepreneurs, programme has partnered them with specialized local agencies such as Auleda and MedAlb Institute who have developed a set of relevant individual investment plans.</p> <p>Programme has given particular attention to economic empowerment of Roma/Egyptian women through provision of agricultural training and assistance in cultivating and marketing medicinal plants.</p>	<p>Particular care has been taken to ensure a smooth phase out and transfer of knowledge to respective authorities while ensuring sustainability of achieved results.</p>
	<p>4. Increased capacity of Social Inclusion Department's staff at MoSWY to monitor implement of the Strategy for Roma and its Decade Action Plan. (WP5)</p>	<p>Number and quality of annual progress reports prepared with inputs and feedback from line ministries and civil society (two annual reports).</p> <p>Number of trainings (as per the needs) and of public information events (6) organized in support of the Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination (CPD) as well as Ombudsman</p>	<p>Project's assistance to the Social Inclusion Department has been adjusted to respond to the structural reform at the MoSWY and align the national policies on Roma and Egyptian inclusion with EU integration agenda 2020. Part of this has been developing of the Action Plan for Roma and Egyptians Integration as part of the social inclusion policy document.</p> <p>The new indicators of the Action Plan are integrated into the web-based reporting system-RomAlb and 16 training sessions were held with some 112 local and central officials.</p> <p>Programme has regularly provided input for preparation of annual reports related to country's progress towards EU accession during 2013 -2015</p> <p>Guidance and support in operationalization and rehabilitation of the Transitory Center for Emergencies has been offered to MoSWY.</p> <p>Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination and People's Advocate have increased their outreach in Roma/Egyptian communities as a result of programme's assistance through 6 open days-event with the CPD in three project regions.</p>	<p>Council of Minister's approval of the new Action Plan for Roma and Egyptian integration and accompanying web-based Reporting and Monitoring system (RomAlb) is expected within 2015.</p>

	5. Raising awareness on social inclusion and appreciation of cultural diversity (WP6)	Awareness events organized regularly with involvement of Roma/Egyptian communities and presented in TV and social media and networks	<p>Authorities, public at large, and mass media have increased their understanding of and commitments on respect for human rights and appreciation for cultural diversity. Engagement of goodwill ambassadors for cultural diversity and Roma/Egyptian role models, has contributed to greater acceptance of Roma and Egyptian identities as an equal and integral part of the Albanian society. Programme newsletters (in Albanian, English and Roma language) as well as articles and documentaries featuring positive examples of integration of Roma/Egyptian individuals have been produced and widely disseminated in various media outlets.</p> <p>Minority reporting skills of 100 journalists have been enhanced as a result of a manual on cultural diversity reporting with focus on Roma/Egyptians and subsequent training sessions held.</p>	Programme revealed the need that social inclusion policies should not exclusively focus on Roma/Egyptians as a disadvantaged group, but also a minority entitled to maintain and further develop their own language and cultural identity, in full compliance with the law.
Activities	WP1. Establishing the project Management structures and procedures.	<p>-UNDP staff (incl., hiring of relevant external human resources) appointed;</p> <p>-Project management procedures drafted and approved by first meeting of Project Management Committee (PMC);</p> <p>-Communication with relevant institutional stakeholders have been conducted;</p> <p>-Logistics, equipment and furniture necessary for implementation of the Action have been put in place;</p>	<p>-11 project staff mobilized and worked to implement the programme;</p> <p>-Four offices (1 in Tirana and 3 in Korca, Berat and Vlora) hosted by local authorities facilitated implementation of local activities.</p> <p>-Programme progressed in accordance with the approved project document as well as the recommendations of the Project Steering Committees.</p> <p>-In late December 2013, a request for fund reallocation from WP2 has been announced by MoSWY, and has been formalised following EUD approval.</p> <p>- The programme duration was extended at no additional cost, to June 30, 2015</p>	
	WP2. Developing participatory local planning and infrastructure supported projects	<p>2.1 Rapid Assessment of Potential intervention areas including cost –benefit analysis;</p> <p>2.2 Community Mobilization/Self-help Activities (overall 30 of which 15 community mobilization and 15 self-help) in 3 per region);</p> <p>2.3 Reinforcing Roma/Egyptian representation at local level through establishment and sustaining of 3 Regional Coordination Committees on Roma (RCCR) and 4 training sessions on participatory planning for LG officials (3 in region and 1 in Tirana);</p>	<p>-Rapid assessment of the intervention areas consisting on regional Roma/Egyptian profiles per each region has been prepared and guided the work of programme.</p> <p>-10 MoUs have been prepared and signed with 8 LG authorities in Korca (Korca city, Pogradec City, Bucimas commune), Vlora (Vlora municipality, Novosel Commune and Shushica commune), and Berat (Berat city and Otlak commune) and 2 with regional councils in Berat and Vlora;</p> <p>- 10 CCFs (composed on Roma/Egyptian individuals) have been mobilized and prioritized local infrastructure needs with involvement of over 150 Roma/Egyptian men and women;</p> <p>- A guidebook on participatory planning and budgeting has been prepared, accompanied with relevant trainings to 60 LGs officials in three regions.</p>	Respective local authorities have recruited the necessary staff including members of Roma/Egyptian communities in order to make viable the services offered at newly established intercultural community centres, kindergarten and health care facility.

		<p>2.4 Communication channels set up with regional authorities with MoUs prepared and signed with LGs in 3 regions</p> <p>2.5 Three-year R/E Community Development Plans prepared for each selected region ;</p> <p>2.6 Seven to nine CUPs (infrastructure projects) identified and implemented</p>	<p>-4 local Roma/Egyptian Community Development Plans with monitoring guides covering the period 2014-2020 have been drafted in close collaboration with LGs units and Roma/Egyptian communities in three regions. Part of the working groups was also 6 Roma/Egyptian local experts (3 male and 3 female) that is 2 in each region. A wide consultation process has taken place in 3 regions with involvement of Roma/Egyptian CSOs, as well as local and national authorities responsible for social inclusion, and currently the draft have been submitted for approval to respective LGs.</p> <p>-10 infrastructure interventions identified by Roma/Egyptian CCFs and agreed for co-funding with LGs have been completed in three regions (<i>kindergartern-health center-community intercultural center in Berat; Kindergarten and School Library in Novosela; Four road rehabilitations in Vlora, Progradeç, Shushica and Otllak; community center and sportive ground in Korca; intercultural community center in Pogradec; Emergency Transitory Center in Tirana; square rehabilitation in Korca</i>). Construction companies have employed several skilled Roma/Egyptian workers during execution of works. The estimated number of beneficiaries is over 3000 households.</p> <p>-Local authorities have been assisted to produce tailor-made informative booklets with standard information on criteria and procedures for accessing 10 various public and social services (such as entitlements to employment services, civic registration, education attainment, healthcare, social housing, legalisation, etc.) The informative package is introduced in six workshops, 2 in each region attended by LG and CSOs representatives. These workshops strengthened the communication between Roma/Egyptian CSOs and LGs while contributing to the discourse for adjusting the community development plans with the new administrative territorial reform.</p> <p>- Active citizenship has been encouraged through support of 78 small self/help and informative activities have been organized in three regions, involving regularly over 300 R/E individuals. Part of these activities were also informative sessions facilitated with experts on education, housing, employment, social welfare and legal aid, who provided answers to over 450 Roma/Egyptian participating individuals.</p> <p>Combination of self-help with sports and recreational events has led to greater involvement of R/E youth and their non-R/E peers which in turn has fostered mutual respect for cultural diversity and social inclusion.</p>	
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	<p>WP 3. Strengthened civil society capacity to combat discrimination.</p>	<p>3.1 Capacity and training needs of Roma/Egyptian CSO-s have been assessed;</p> <p>3.2 Training and coaching assistance to selected CSO-s on themes as identified at the assessment, has been provided;</p> <p>3.3 Support collaboration of Roma/Egyptian and non-Roma/Egyptian CSOs through "bank of ideas" and funding of 3 best proposals (12,000 EUR each)</p> <p>3.4 Small Grants programme (15 grants in total of between 5,000 to 12,000 EUR)</p>	<p>- An assessment of Roma/Egyptian CSOs conducted by the program revealed not only the institutional gaps but also the potentials for their transformation into important factor into the country's social inclusion agenda.</p> <p>- Based on the assessment a comprehensive training and coaching programme consisting in 12 topics (<i>i.e. advocacy and lobbying, human rights, human resources management, fundraising, financial management of NGO, etc</i>) has been offered to existing and newly established Roma/Egyptian CSOs operating in three regions ;</p> <p>- 12 training manuals relevant for the functioning of CSOs utilised during the training have been standardized and are available for future reference by both new and existing organizations.</p> <p>- 15 local Roma/ Egyptian CSOs have been provided with grants to implement small community development initiatives in three regions (9 in Korca, 4 in Berat and 2 in Vlora). Coaching assistance in administration and reporting has been provided to all assisted Roma/Egyptian CSOs.</p> <p>- Additionally 3 Roma/Egyptian CSOs have partnered with well-established non-Roma/Egyptian CSOs to implement joint community development initiative with a view to strengthen capacities of the Roma/Egyptian CSOs and better respond to challenges of social inclusion and human rights.</p>	<p>The training and coaching modules developed and delivered to involved Roma and Egyptian CSOs shall be extended to others operating in other parts of the country, Pro</p>
	<p>WP4. Job promotion for Roma/Egyptian communities</p>	<p>4.1 Assessment on Roma/Egyptian job and entrepreneurship has been conducted;</p> <p>4.2 supporting and coaching (at least 20 job seekers and potentials entrepreneurs and 10 Roma/Egyptian artisans) through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Business development training and assistance; - Start up kits and income-generation coaching; - Marketing support actions; <p>4.3 Tailored VET and guidance on innovative and non-traditional entrepreneurship provided to 60 R/E men and women ;</p>	<p>- Assessment on challenges and opportunities for Roma/Egyptian trainees, artisans and entrepreneurs has been finalised providing a set of recommendations. Database with regional vocational training and micro-credit providers, has been developed and made available to interested Roma and Egyptian households in three regions;</p> <p>- A manual on 100 innovative ideas for self-employment with practical guidelines on preparation of business plans, prepared by the programme has triggered new income generation ideas (<i>i.e. car washing, DJ and music production, ambulant trading, tattoo making, farming, etc.</i>) that could be adapted by Roma/Egyptian job-seekers as per the specifics of the local labour markets.</p> <p>- A variety of vocational courses/training has been provided to 90 Roma/Egyptian job seekers in three regions. The trainings consisted in cultivation of medicinal plants (55), camera operation- video- assembling and news reporting (18), hairdressing, aesthetics, cuisine, mechanic, barber, welder, and tailor (17).</p>	<p>The incubation of self-employment and income generation model should be integrated as part of the active labour market measures addressing the social sensitivities that result from long-standing social exclusion and long-term unemployment</p>

		4.4 Monitoring and Re-calibrations of support	<p>-38 R/E individuals, both graduates and skilled workers have been engaged temporarily with programme support in public administration, local partner service providers in three regions, and as such have increased their employability skills and gained work experience. On the job training consisted in a variety of fields such as: coach for employment (4); facilitators in drafting local community development plans for Roma/Egyptian (6); young professionals assisting in drafting the Action Plan for Roma/Egyptian integration (2); Facilitators on protection from discrimination at the offices of PA and CPD (2); construction workers engaged in implementation of programme infrastructure interventions (23); auxiliary nurse (1)</p> <p>-Business development training and assistance for developing individual investment plans followed by provision of start-up kits, income-generation coaching and marketing support has been offered to 110 Roma/Egyptian households.(55 individuals provided with sage seedlings, milling machines as well as harvesting tools – Berat (15), Vlora (25), Korca (15); 55 individuals assisted with startup kits in farming, cattle breeding, hairdressing, music performance, plumbing, sewing, car washing, crafting and trading - Berat (16), Vlora (16) and Korca (23);</p> <p>-Over 50 Roma/Egyptian artisans from three regions have been assisted with product design and marketing skills through participation in trainings and artisans fairs;</p>	
	WP5.Providing support for the implementation of Roma Strategy and Decade Action Plan	<p>5.1 Support MoSWY through</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Training and coaching sessions; -Aligning the National Action Plan for the Decade of Roma Inclusion with the Social Inclusion and Social Protection Strategy as relevant to European integration; <p>5.2 Support Human Right and Anti-Discrimination institutions (i.e. CPD and PA) to increase effectiveness in project rights of Roma/Egyptians through;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Outreach plan for CPD; -Legal manual for CPD; -6 public information events for CPD; -inclusion of Roma/Egyptian Young Professionals (Fellows) in respective institutions (CPD and PA); <p>5.3 Supporting Commissioner on Protection from Discrimination and People's Advocate through;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Training session on anti-discrimination and minority rights provided to CPD staff 	<p>- In follow up to the high level discussions, specifically the operational conclusions of the seminar of February 20-21 2014 held in Tirana, assistance is provided to MoSWY for aligning the local policies on Social Inclusion of Roma with the EU 2020 platform for Roma integration ensuring an informed participation of Roma/Egyptian CSOs. A participatory process took place for drafting of the Action Plan for Integration of Roma and Egyptians 2020, involving civil society, local authorities as well as line ministries. Programme involved a team of international and national experts including two young Roma/Egyptian professionals. The draft is expected to be approved within 2015.</p> <p>- 16 training sessions were held on web-based reporting and monitoring system (RomAlb) with participation of 112 local and central officials. The Social Inclusion Department of the MoSWY has been assisted to host the system and coordinate the work with other line ministries and subordinate institutions.</p> <p>- Input for full operationalization of the ROMALB web-based reporting system has been collected in two regional workshops held with local authorities respectively in Vlora and Berat.</p>	Programme has closely worked with MoSWY and local authorities to upgrade the Romalb web-based reporting system which will ensure regular monitoring of the new Action Plan for Roma and Egyptian integration.

			<p>- Technical expertise has been provided to People's Advocate for finalization of three legal amendment on social housing, economic aid and transfer of residence, in response to the situation of Roma evicted families in Tirana prior to their sheltering at the Transitory Center of Emergencies;</p> <p>-A legal "how to" manual as well as a community outreach guide with particular focus on Roma/Egyptian communities has been developed and is being utilized by the staff Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination to address cases involving R/E individuals;</p> <p>-6 information campaigns were organized with Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination with youth groups and representatives of Roma/Egyptian CSOs, helping the Commissioner's outreach in Roma/Egyptian populated areas in three regions.</p> <p>-Two qualified Roma/Egyptian university graduates fellows have been supported to serve as facilitators for protection from discrimination, respectively at Commissioner and People's Advocate for a year period, while lobbying to ensure a permanent status in respective institutions.</p> <p>Informative flyers on services and relevant procedure of the CPS tailored in a user-friendly language in both Albanian and Romane have been produced and disseminated widely.</p>	
	<p>WP 6. Preparing and implementing the visibility and communication campaign aiming at 6.1) raise the profile of Roma/ Egyptian engagement in community projects, business as the best way to combat discrimination; 6.2) raise their awareness about social inclusion</p>	<p>6.1 Preparation of the Communication Strategy and Action Plan;</p> <p>6.2 Implement an awareness and advocacy campaign through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Media event to launch the project; - Two public events on progress and results delivered by the project; - Two media training sessions on how to report on Roma related issues with involvement of UN press club; - Brochure and facts sheet produced; -One TV/radio/web streaming broadcasted; -Two talk shows featuring successful Roma to be organized in TV channels; -Three press trips to project areas; Social media i.e. Facebook utilized; -A video documentary with Roma beneficiaries (Roma voices); 	<p>-A comprehensive communication campaign has been implemented under the slogan "you and I equal in diversity". Part of it have been nine prominent personalities from the world of art, literature, media and academia announced as Cultural Diversity Goodwill Ambassadors as well as Roma/Egyptian role models whom have conveyed the message of social inclusion and appreciation for cultural diversity;</p> <p>-A training manual for reporters on cultural diversity with a focus on Roma and Egyptian Communities has been produced and disseminated amongst over 100 journalists by the programme in collaboration with the Media Institute;</p> <p>- 2 training sessions have been organized with 53 young journalists who have enhanced their skills on minority reporting with an exclusive focus on anti-discrimination, protection of human dignity and cultural diversity.</p> <p>-A national contest on the best development story on minorities with a focus on Roma and Egyptians was organized and three reporters were awarded for their excellence in reporting diversity.</p>	<p>- All events have been presented in various media sources (i.e. TV, newspapers, social media) and have encouraged a greater focus on positive aspects of Roma/Egyptians in media.</p>

		<p>-Quarterly story on project to be posted at UNDP website and sent out to partners via email;</p> <p>-three events involving school students to be organized</p> <p>-TV Spots produced and broadcasted</p> <p>-Project's best practices documented and disseminated</p>	<p>resulting from programme interventions highlighting the contribution of role models have been featured in various media channels. 3 documentaries ("Equal in Diversity"; "When Dreams Become Reality; A step toward social inclusion") have been produced and broadcasted. 3 TV shows focusing on programme assistance have been broadcasted during 2013 and 2014. These programs involved not only Roma and Egyptian beneficiaries but also representatives of key institutions such as Minister of Social Welfare and Youth, People Advocate and Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination. For greater outreach such programs have been broadcasted mainly on internationally marked days through programme life.</p> <p>- Cultural events have also been organized in partnership with central and local authorities as well as University of Arts and National Historic Museum to promote talented Roma/Egyptian artists and artisans. Some of the major activities supported involve artisans' fairs, staging of drama by Roma/Egyptian youth and University of Arts students, exhibition of talented Roma visual artist, announcement of Cultural Diversity Goodwill Ambassadors and Roma/Egyptian role models, screening of human rights documentaries. All of these have echoed and promoted decent elements of Roma and Egyptian identities.</p> <p>-Sports events have accompanied the campaign and three football teams (one in each region) composed of Roma/Egyptian young men, have been supported to periodically organize thematic football matches with various LG representatives and distinguished personalities. To date 4 matches have been organized in internationally marked days with occasion of , cultural diversity day, as well as anti-discrimination day;</p> <p>-National Public Albanian TV (TVSH) started regular broadcasting in Romani language in December 2013 with programme support.</p> <p>- The slogan "You and I - Equal in Diversity" has been enclosed in various promotional toolkits such as notebooks, pens and t-shirts and USB-s all of which have been disseminated to project beneficiaries and stakeholders;</p> <p>- Social media has been regularly utilized for promoting successful stories of Roma/Egyptian individuals involved in different project activities. This has led to raising their public profile and be offered several education, training as well as employment opportunities.</p> <p>-Organization of the Social Good Summit in Berat: Theme: How do social media and technology affect the community and make the world a better place.</p>	

			<p>- Site visits with 12 journalists arranged in three regions to meet Roma and Egyptian farmers, artisans, and other individuals and see the infrastructure investments completed in areas inhabited by Roma and Egyptian communities.</p>	
			<p>-To mark the closure of the project a conference entitled "Advancing social inclusion of Roma and Egyptians Communities" was organized on June 12, 2015 in Tirana. The conference brought together some 80 participants, national and local stakeholders involved with project implementation cycle as well as project beneficiaries. Three thematic working groups in this event contributed to upgrading the discourse on future potential intervention targeting social inclusion of Roma and Egyptian communities in Albania.</p> <p>-The following is a list of links to articles on programme implementation and results. http://www.gazetaexpress.com/?cid=1,91,126065 ; http://bashkiaberat.gov.al/?cat=87 ; http://www.panorama.com.al/2013/08/26/pnud-ja-si-jane-perdorur-fondet-e-be-se/ https://www.facebook.com/pages/UNDP-Albania-Supporting-Social-Inclusion-of-Roma-and-Egyptian-Communities/394082717351858 http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/ourwork/povertyreduction/successstories/giving-roma-and-egyptians-in-albania-an-economic-boost.html http://www.balkanweb.com/m/sociale/sipermarrie-ne-bujqesipnue-mbeshtet-familjet-rome-dhe-egjiptiane-202919.html https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MDLD20688fQ (http://www.lajm-shqip.com/2014/01/punesim-per-romet-dhe-egjiptianet-prezantohet-projekti-ne-berat-burimi-shqiptarja-com-www-shqiptarja-com/)</p>	

			http://www.oranews.tv/videogaleri/berat-nxitet-vetpunesimi-i-komunitetit-rom-trajnohen-e-mbeshteten-financiarisht-te-rinjte/ http://youtu.be/klprf6lroq0 http://mapo.al/2014/07/pnud-ndihmon-nengritjen-e-aktiviteteve-ekonomike-te-komunitetit-rom-dhe-egjiptian/ ; http://www.ata.gov.al/vlore-agjensia-auleda-mbeshtet-krijimin-e-20-biznesve-per-komunitetet-rome-e-egjiptiane-201680.html ; http://www.shqiptarja.com/Lajme%20Shkurt/2749/nd-rlidhja-e-komuniteteve---nj-investim-i-ri-infrastrukturor-n-pogradec-253599.html ; http://www.oranews.tv/vendi/prezantohen-qendrat-komunitare-ne-fier-e-berat-veliaj-bonus-per-femijet-rom-qe-shkollohen-e-vaksinohe/ ; http://www.al.undp.org/content/albania/en/home/presscenter/articles/2014/06/15/communities-in-berat-to-benefit-from-a-new-intercultural-community-center/ ;	
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Budget for the Action ¹	Unit	Budget as per Notification 5			Total Expenditures 2012 - 2015			Total Expenditures 2012 - 2015		
		# of units	Unit rate (in EUR)	Costs (in EUR)	# of units	Unit rate (in USD)	Costs (in USD)	# of units	Unit rate (in EUR)	Costs (in EUR)
4.1 Transportation costs	Per month	24	102	2,460	24	135	3,240	24	105	2,532
4.2 Other services (tel/fax, Internet, electricity heating, maintenance, cleaning)	Per month	28	228	6,373	28	315	8,823	28	246	6,896
4.3 Consumables - office supplies	Per month	28	47	1,315	28	60	1,681	28	48	1,344
4.4 Project Office rent (per three regions)	Per month	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Subtotal Local office				69,297			95,218			73,647
5. Other costs, services⁸										
5.1 Publications ⁹										
5.1.1. Project Brochure	Per piece	5,800	3	16,550	5,800	4	22,302	5,800	3	16,606
5.1.2. Project Facisheet	Per piece	1,500	4	6,300	1,500	6	8,905	1,500	4	6,460
5.1.3. Doing Business Brochures	Per piece	1,500	2	3,185	1,500	3	5,148	1,500	3	4,003
5.1.4. Commissioner Brochure	Per piece	2,000	0	660	2,000	0	853	2,000	0	649
5.1.5. Other promotional toolkits	Per piece	4,094	2	8,115	4,094	3	10,435	4,094	2	8,213
5.1.6. Roma strategy progress report	Per piece	1,200	1	750	1,200	1	776	1,200	0	561
5.1.7. Simple language information leaflets	Per piece	4,000	1	4,500	4,000	2	6,380	4,000	1	4,613
5.1.8. Advertisement costs	Per announcement	45	38	1,730	45	46	2,090	45	37	1,683
5.2 Studies, research ⁹										
5.2.1 Capacity Needs assessment and data collection	Service Contract	1	8,000	8,000	1	9,938	9,938	1	8,000	8,000
5.2.2 Business Development services from specialized agency	Service Contract	1	14,525	14,525	1	18,672	18,672	1	14,524	14,524
5.2.3 Training modules/manual development for NGOs	Service Contract	1	2,350	2,350	1	3,256	3,256	1	2,423	2,423
5.3 Expenditure verification							0			0
5.4 Evaluation costs	Service Contract	1	11,000	11,000	1	14,058	14,058	1	12,863	12,863
5.5 Translation, interpreters - english/albanian/roma languages	Per day	47	195	9,180	47	268	12,577	47	195	9,177
5.6 Financial services (bank guarantee costs etc.)	Per transaction	2,000	1	1,830	2,000	1	2,576	2,000	1	2,041
5.7 Costs of conferences/seminars ⁹										
5.7.1. Launch Event	Per event	1	6,000	6,000	1	7,375	7,375	1	5,937	5,937
5.7.2 Costs of three trainings for WP 2	Per training	3	2,000	6,000	3	2,484	7,453	3	2,000	6,000
5.7.3 Costs of Capacity Building trainings for CSO	Per training	6	2,123	12,740	6	3,143	18,856	6	2,519	15,114
5.7.4. Bank of Ideas Event	Per event	1	1,725	1,725	1	2,368	2,368	1	1,716	1,716
5.7.5 Awareness capacity building events	Per event	3	1,500	4,500	3	1,863	5,590	3	1,500	4,500
5.7.6. Business development training	Per training	6	1,000	6,000	6	1,242	7,453	6	1,000	6,000
5.7.7. Training programme on businesses planning and management	Per training	7	753	5,270	7	941	6,584	7	753	5,270
5.7.8. Training sessions on anti-discrimination, minority rights and intercultural education	Per training	5	694	3,470	5	956	4,779	5	716	3,579
5.7.9. Vocational training provision from public and non-public institutions including professional tools costs	Service Contract	4	8,093	32,370	4	10,823	43,292	4	8,092	32,370
5.7.10 Extra VET courses / on-the-job training	Per Region	3	4,240	12,720	3	5,267	15,800	3	4,240	12,719
5.7.11 Journalists training	Per event	2	5,238	10,475	2	7,224	14,449	2	5,633	11,266
5.7.12 Self help activities in three regions	Per event	15	1,460	21,900	15	1,620	24,298	15	1,298	19,471
5.7.13 ROMA Products marketing fair	Per event	3	2,420	7,260	3	3,051	9,154	3	2,447	7,341
5.7.14 Women/girls equality promotion days	Per event	6	2,277	13,660	6	3,149	18,893	6	2,366	14,194
5.7.15 RTS trainings on project management cycle	Per training	3	3,083	9,250	3	4,871	14,613	3	4,281	12,844

Budget for the Action ¹	Costs	Unit	Budget as per Notification 5			Total Expenditures 2012 - 2015			Total Expenditures 2012 - 2015		
			# of units	Unit rate (in EUR)	Costs (in EUR)	# of units	Unit rate (in USD)	Costs (in USD)	# of units	Unit rate (in EUR)	Costs (in EUR)
5.7.16 Action closure workshop		Per event	1	2,750	2,750	1	3,790	3,790	1	2,740	2,740
5.8. Visibility actions ¹⁰											
5.8.1 High school/university public information event		Per event	4	1,225	4,900	4	1,660	6,641	4	1,269	5,076
5.8.2 Talk Show		Per event	2	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	0
5.8.3 Visibility actions in three regions		Per region	1	1,760	1,760	1	2,354	2,354	1	1,780	1,780
5.8.4 Documentary production and airing		Per event	2	7,670	15,340	3	6,745	20,236	3	5,111	15,334
5.8.5 TV Educational campaign		Per campaign	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0
5.9. Web-based reporting and monitoring system		Provision	1	8,740	8,740	1	12,076	12,076	1	9,626	9,626
5.10 Community mobilization/self help activities in three regions		Per event	70	157	11,000	78	229	17,857	78	179	13,948
5.11 Culture event (theatre, concert, show) to promote R/E values		Per event	3	10,700	32,100	3	14,474	43,421	3	10,761	32,282
Subtotal Other costs, services					318,605			425,300			330,922
6. Other											
6.1 Infrastructure projects (for the three Regions)		Per project	10	52,848	528,475	10	68,965	689,647	10	51,711	517,114
6.2 Fifteen OSO grants		Per grant	15	10,821	162,320	15	14,220	213,303	15	10,699	160,480
6.3 Three "Non-Discrimination and Tolerance" grants		Per grant	3	10,790	32,370	3	14,922	44,767	3	10,789	32,366
6.4 Senior Expert in Employment and Business Development for Roma		Per day	30	420	12,605	30	349	10,473	30	275	8,241
6.5 Expert on tender dossier preparation		Per day	30	155	4,660	30	200	6,012	30	160	4,798
6.6 Expert on communications strategy development		Per day	30	141	4,225	30	175	5,257	30	141	4,232
6.7 Expert on TNA for NGOs		Per day	32	222	7,100	32	29	928	32	21	671
6.8 Expert for preparation of guidelines for call for proposals		Per day	65	128	8,350	65	249	16,160	65	186	12,110
6.9 Expert on monitoring systems		Per day	10	167	1,670	10	191	1,906	10	138	1,378
6.10 Expert on web-based monitoring tools		Per day	60	132	7,930	60	146	8,766	60	106	6,338
6.11 Expert on antidiscrimination policies and inter-culturalism		Per day	689	53	36,562	689	69	47,338	689	51	35,024
6.12 Expert on artisan product development		Per day	27	132	3,575	27	164	4,438	27	132	3,573
6.13 Expert on marketing		Per day	55	171	9,400	55	295	16,240	55	217	11,922
6.14 Expert on public relations		Per day	80	132	10,550	80	171	13,685	80	124	9,894
6.15 VET Training Expert		Per day	30	0	0	30	0	0	30	0	0
6.16 Legal expert		Per day	47	141	6,615	47	189	8,902	47	145	6,794
6.17 Statistician		Per day	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Subtotal Other					836,407			1,087,820			814,935
7. Subtotal direct eligible costs of the Action (1+6)					1,593,925			2,086,318			1,584,564
8. Provision for contingency reserve (maximum 5% of 7, subtotal of direct eligible costs of the Action)											
9. Total direct eligible costs of the Action (7+ 8)					1,593,925			2,086,318			1,584,564
10. Administrative costs (maximum 7% of 9, totdirect eligible costs of Action)					101,075			132,272			100,461
11. Total eligible costs (9+10)					1,695,000			2,218,590			1,685,025
12. Taxes ¹¹											
13. Total accepted¹¹ costs of the Action (11+12)					1,695,000			2,218,590			1,685,025



Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.

FINAL REPORT

July 2012 – June 2015

Supporting Social Inclusion of
Roma and Egyptian Communities (SSIREC) Project