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1st INTERIM PROGRESS REPORT

For the period:
July 2012 - December 2013

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

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

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Important Disclaimer

Supporting Social Inclusion of Roma and Egyptian Communities is a 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 is being implemented by United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Country Office in Albania in partnership with the Ministry of Social Wellbeing and Youth. Views and comments in this report do not necessarily reflect the views of the abovementioned institutions.

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ACRONYMS

CCF	Community Counselling Forums
CDP	Community Development Plans
CUP	Community Upgrading Projects
CSO	Civil Society Organizations
EU	European Union
LG	Local Government
MoSWY	Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGO	Non-Governmental Organizations
NPO	Non Profit Organizations
R&E	Roma and Egyptian
RCASN	Regional Committees on Assessment of Social Needs
TRCCR	Technical Regional Coordination Committees for Roma
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WP	Work Package

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The main objective of the Social Inclusion of R/E Communities (SSIREC) project is to contribute to the social and economic empowerment of R/E people in Albania and improvement of social inclusion focusing in the regions of Berat, Korca and Vlora. The Project relies on the multi-sectorial and self-empowerment approach and contains five components including: (1) participation in local planning and implementation of Community Upgrading Projects (CUP); (2) capacity building activities aimed at R/E Civil Society Organizations (CSOs); (3) measures supporting job promotion and entrepreneurship in the R/E communities; (4) assisting Social Inclusion Department (*Drejtoria e Perfshirjes Sociale*) and the institutions responsible for human rights and protection from discrimination such as People's Advocate (*Avokati i Popullit*) and Office of Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination (*Zyra e Komisioneres për Mbrojtjen nga Diskriminimi*); 5) awareness raising and advocacy for R/E acceptance and inclusion. Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth (MoSWY) and local authorities in three regions play a key role in implementing specific project activities and are all represented in the Project Management Committee.

The implementation of the Action has started in July 2012 and this is the first interim report covering the period July 2012 – December 2013. Despite a slowdown of processes in public administration as a result of June 2013's parliamentary elections, Project has progressed well particularly with prioritization and implementation of six infrastructure interventions, provision of training s and small grants to thirteen R/E Civil Society Organizations (SCOs), as well as creating an appreciative climate for cultural diversity while advocating for greater social inclusion in three regions. Dialogue of R/E communities with local authorities has already been institutionalized through functioning of ten R/E Community Counseling Forums (CCFs) and finalization of processes for drafting of R/E Community Development Plans (CDPs) in three project regions.

Main Achievements to date:

- Three regional profiles of Korca, Vlora and Berat containing data on R/E population size, challenges and potentials have been prepared guiding the work of project and serving as baseline for other interventions;
- Six infrastructure interventions (i.e. construction of kindergarten, health centers, roads and sports ground) have been initiated and are under completion in R/E neighborhoods or or easily accessible by them, in three regions;
- Ten R/E Community Counseling Forums (CCFs) are established and mobilized to implement 49 self-help and awareness raising activities in three regions;
- Eight drafts of Community Development Plans focusing on R/E communities have been prepared accompanied with implementation and monitoring guides for the period 2015 – 2020;
- A capacity and training needs assessment of R/E Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) is finalized identifying 12 topics where training and coaching support is needed to strengthen their institutional capacities;
- A comprehensive training and coaching programme on project cycle management have been

delivered to local R/E CSOs, building their advocacy, fundraising and management skills.

- A call for proposal package containing application guidelines as well as templates for reporting have been prepared and launched for R/E NGOs during November 2013. Thirteen proposals from R/E NGOs have been selected and supported with small grants (averaging to 10,000 USD each) for implementation of small community initiatives in Korca, Berat and Vlora regions during January- November 2014;
 - An assessment study on employment and entrepreneurship in R/E communities has been finalized, identifying challenges and opportunities for R/E vocational trainees, artisans and potential entrepreneurs, accompanied with a set of recommendations. A database with regional vocation training and micro-credit providers has been annexed to the study;
 - Non-traditional vocational trainings and business development services are being provided to 90 R/E artisans as well as job-seekers and potential entrepreneurs in three regions in collaboration with specialized local agencies, respectively regions, AULEDA (in Vlora and Berat), RDA (in Korca).
 - 30 R/E artisans had been provided a two-day training on craft design and marking skills and are networked with a local specialized agency (Destination Management Organization – DMO) which is facilitating their participation in various regional fairs ;
 - 18 R/E individuals from various regions of the country have complete a fourth month training in Korca as news reporters, camera operator and film/documentary producers and 6 of them are hired by Disutni Albania (a Roma NGO in Korca) to produce a Roma TV programme broadcasted on Albanian Public Television (TVSH) the by-weekly since September 2013.
 - 22 R/E individuals (university graduates and skilled workers) have been engaged temporarily from two - ten months in public administration (i.e. Peoples Advocate and Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination), local service providers (i.e. construction companies, organizations delivering business development services in three regions), thus increasing employability skills and work experience.
 - Training and coaching support provided throughout 2013 to Social Inclusion Department at MoSWY as well as 15 local officials on the newly established ROMALB monitoring-reporting system. Two regional meeting have been organized with local authorities in Berat and Korca related to challenges and recommendations for operationalizing the system;
 - Technical guidance and support has been provided to MoSWY throughout 2013 for establishment as well as rehabilitation and functioning of the Transitory Center for Emergencies (TCE), set up recently in response to the eviction cases of Roma families in Tirana. TCE currently provides shelter to 53 Roma families;
 - Legal expertise has been provided to People's Advocate for finalization of three legal amendments on social housing, economic aid and transfer of residence, as a necessary measure to improve the situation of Roma evicted families;
 - A legal “how to” manual as well as a community outreach plan with particular focus on R/E communities is being developed for Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination (CPD). Three public information events are being organized with media representatives, university students and R/E SCOs
-

in partnership with CPD;

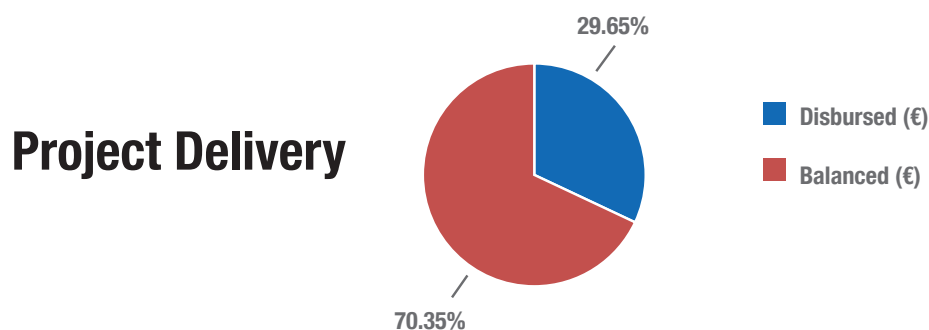
- A comprehensive communication strategy and plan has been finalized stressing on involvement of Goodwill Ambassadors for Cultural Diversity, involving nine prominent Albanian personalities as well as R/E role models, selected to convey the message of social inclusion and appreciation for cultural diversity, under the slogan” you and me – equal in diversity.
- Two TV documentaries “equal in diversity and “when dream become reality” have been produced and disseminated through social networks (Facebook and YouTube);
- One TV show entitled “Diversity as priority” with participation of SSIREC Project Manager and R/E role models has been organized at the Albanian Public Television TVSH and broadcasted on April 8, 2013 with the occasion of International Roma Day.
- Roma values week consisting on a series of events (i.e. artisans’ fair, staging of drama “Les miserables” by R/E students at university of Arts, announcement of Goodwill Ambassadors for Cultural Diversity and R/E role models as well as screening of human rights documentaries) organized during the week of April 8 2013, to mark the International Roma Day.
- The adherence to EU-UNDP visibility guidelines has been strictly followed. Several communication and visibility actions have been undertaken such as: visibility on equipment, premises, publications, meetings, newsletters, visibility of training delivery, visits to investment sites, etc

Budget and Expenditures

Overall project funding is 1,695,000.00 €, out of which 1,500,000.00 €, from European Union, 150,000.00 € from UNDP and 45,000.00 € from Albanian Government. The project has received the first installment from European Union in 22 June 2013, in the amount of 499,873.31 €.

The contribution from Albanian Government was received in 25 October 2013 in the amount of 6,000,000 ALL, equal to 42,437.62 €, while the approved project budget stipulates 45,000 € as GoA contribution to SSIREC project. In order not to change the total amount of the budget, 1,695,000 €, UNDP will add the difference of 2,562.38 € into its contribution, which now amounts to 152,562.38 €.

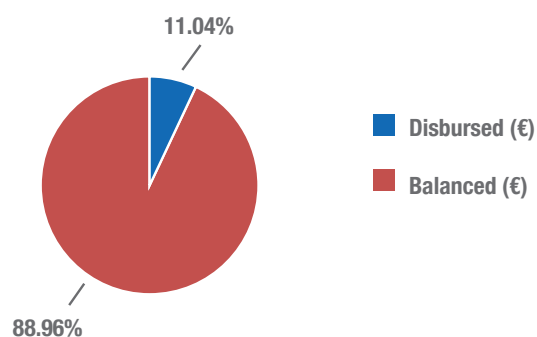
The project delivery, against overall budget, as of 31 Dec 2013, stands at **30%**, with **624,207.00 USD** or **502,486.00 €** disbursed.



While the expenditures of the project against the first installment reach about 90% of the funds received. Thus the project is eligible for requesting the next installment as per the Option 2 of Article 15 of General Conditions. The calculation of the total amount of the first installment stands as follows:

Installment in EUR	EC (88.5%)	UNDP (8.85%)	GOV (2.65%)	Total (100%)
Inst 1	499,873.31	49,987	14,968	564,828.31

Project Delivery



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 Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities launched the Project on July 11, 2012. The launching ceremony of the project was hosted by Municipality of Korca, and was accompanied by an intercultural artisan fair held at the city's traditional market place where R/E 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. As specified in the project document, 11 staff members were to be hired and four local offices (one in Tirana and three in respective regions) were to be established. The staff recruitment process took longer than expected due to the re-advertisement of post in Berat and Vlora in order to ensure competition and hire the best qualified candidates. The timely setting up of regional offices particularly in Berat and Vlora depended on the provision from local authorities of office space for project staff. The bureaucracies for this arrangement created some delays and the project was fully operational in January 2013.

Project has been operating based on the approved work plan reflecting recommendations provided by the Project Management Committee as well as the first ROM report.

WP2. Participatory Planning and Infrastructure Supported Projects

2.1 Rapid Assessment of Potential Intervention Areas

A data collection and consultation process was undertaken in three regions with the participation of local government, de-concentrated offices of the central government, R/E and non R/E NGOs and community activists/leaders. Three Regional Profiles for Korca, Berat and Vlora (see Annex 2.1) were prepared identifying R/E settlements in each region, size of population, social economic situation, the presence of discriminatory practices, the challenges of R/E Communities in accessing or benefitting public services such as 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 R/E. The regional profiles are also used as a baseline guiding the planning, implementation and monitoring of activities in the three target regions.

The participatory inception workshop organized at the start of the project (October 3, 2012) set the project ground by identifying the project approaches and partners in the three project regions, making use of the baseline data of the regional profiles. The process led to the identification of 8 local units inhabiting 7000 R/E families in three regions as the focus of participatory planning and infrastructure development interventions, while additional 6 local units or about 1300 R/E families are benefiting from training and grants to civil society organizations (CSOs) employment and entrepreneurship assistance, capacity support for local authorities to implement and monitor National Action Plan for the Decade of Roma Inclusion, as well as from the awareness raising and information campaigns.

The recent R/E Employment and Entrepreneurship Assessment, R/E civil society organizations Training Assessment, the Web-based data Reporting System on the National Action Plan for the Decade of Roma Inclusion, all supported by the Project, together with several analysis and policy briefs in the areas of Roma education, employment, housing and health prepared by various UNDP programmes, have constituted a strong platform for the policy reforms of MoSWY regarding social inclusion of R/E communities.

2.2 Community mobilization activities

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

A variety of self-help and mobilization activities have been organized in three regions related to promotion of equal education, voluntarism, human rights, women empowerment, environmental protection, marketing of artisan products, as well as building of coalition and cultural exchange.

49 community mobilization and self/help activities have been organized in three regions during the reporting period, involving regularly over 300 R/E individuals; Combination of self-help with sports and recreational events has led to greater involvement of R/E youth and their non-R/E peers and praising of cultural diversity.

These activities are introduced as integral part of high school curricular hours on community work, as well as the annual awareness raising calendar of education, health, and employment institutions. In addition to cultural exchange among R/E and non R/E, project has been given particular attention to greater and equal participation of female R/E individuals as they are the most vulnerable groups suffering multi-dimensional discrimination on the grounds of gender, ethnicity, as well as economic situation. (*See Annex 2.2 Community Mobilization and self-help activities in the three regions*).

2.3 Reinforcing of R/E representation in the Local Government Level

The local community development coordinators and R/E community facilitators in the three regions supported local officials at the Regional level to establish three Technical Regional Committees for Roma (TRCR) (*Grupi Teknik për Çështjet Rome*), composed of officials of education directorates, employment offices, healthcare departments, municipalities and communes inhabited by R/E communities, as well as representatives of R/E civil society organizations. The terms of reference for functioning of the TRCCR, have been tailored having regard to the decision of Council of Ministers regulating the functioning of the Regional Committees on Assessment of Social Needs (RCASN), (*Komiteti Rajonal për Vlerësimin e Nevojave Sociale*), as well as the established practice in other regions where UNDP has been intervening in support of Roma. (See Annex 2.3 ToRs of TRCR)

Despite the political rotation at subordinated Regional Directorates of education, employment, health and social services, project has facilitated two formal meetings of the Technical Regional Coordination Committees for Roma (TRCCR) (*Grupi Teknik për Çështjet Rome*) in Vlorë and Berat health respectively on. In such meetings great emphasis was put on the need for approving the web-based reporting system (ROMALB) by Council of Ministers and provision of training to the designated officials responsible for the regular data entry. The meeting of TRCCR in Korça is postponed for early 2014 time when the functioning of the Regional Committees on Assessment of Social Needs (RCASN), (*Komiteti Rajonal për Vlerësimin e Nevojave Sociale*), would be reaffirmed or reformed by the new government. (Annex 2.3. (a) and (b) Activity Report on RTCR meetings in Vlorë and Berat)

R/E NGOs have been enabled to take the leadership of R/E Community Counseling Forums and thus have the latter bring R/E voice to local authorities regularly in participatory budgeting and local prioritization practice, which with assistance of the project has expanded in all local units and is turning into an annual LG tradition in three regions.

In addition, local units have committed themselves that during operationalization of social infrastructure projects (i.e. community centers, health centers, kindergarten etc) will be hiring a proportional number of R/E qualified individuals. The first R/E recruits at local level are expected in Korça, Pogradec and Berat municipalities where community centers are being built. This would add another dimension in the R/E representation at local level where they will not be only target community but also represented in staff of service providers. Project is encouraging employment of qualified R/E 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.

2.4 Preparation and Signature UNDP-Local Government Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)

Project team has been working closely with local governments in selected regions ensuring their institutional involvement at all phases of project implementation. Memorandum of Understandings (MoU) have been prepared and signed with ten 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 Community Upgrading Projects (CUP). As regards the LGs financial contribution it should be noted that this is not an obligatory/mandatory requirement for the LGUs benefitting from the infrastructure projects. Neither the Description of the Action, nor the Budget refers to financial contributions from LGUs. This is introduced as an addition, going beyond project requirements. It aims at ensuring a long term commitment of LGUs to respond to R/E Communities challenges making them part of the LG development priorities. The MoUs signed with the Municipalities and Communes do not make reference to this contribution. Being aware of the financial crisis and budgetary cuts in the local budget, the project team is continuing discussions with local authorities to reinforce their commitment to development priorities of R/E Communities financial or in kind contributions making them part and parcel of Municipality/ Commune plans and actions. (See Annex 2.4 MoUs with LG Units in three regions)

2.5 Design and Implement R/E Community Development Plans

Participatory budgeting and preparation of Community Development Plans have been two most important processes where R/E **Community Counseling Forums** (CCF) in each of 9 R/E inhabited areas in Korca, Berat and regions have participated. The processes have been preceded by respective training on participatory planning and budgeting to 60 local officials as well as involvement of over 150 R/E CCF members.

Six training workshops have been organized on participatory strategic planning and action plans, followed by bank of ideas sessions in three regions. During such 60 local officials increased their understanding of challenges and opportunities concerning R/E communities respectively in Vlora, Berat and Korca regions .These events helped to build capacities of LGs and CCFs as well as collect the necessary data used for drafting of eight R/E Community Development Plans.

Local working groups were set up with participation of LGs, CCFs as well as experts team among whom also 6 R/E qualified individuals (3 male and 3 female) hired by IDM in each region. Currently the draft Community Development Plans have been shared for comments with involved actors. The plans combine both soft actions such as tax exemption initiatives for R/E artisans and small entrepreneurs, employment of qualified R/E individuals in local administration, as well as infrastructure development involving construction of community centers, kindergarten, roads, sewage etc. Moreover, these plans are aligned with National Action Plan for

Roma Inclusion and anticipate local measures is response to school segregation, poor housing conditions, inability to attend vocational trainings, lack of civil registration documentation, inability to become part of social welfare or pension schemes, the need for free legal aid and the like. *(See Annex 2.5 Draft Community Development Plans for three regions)*

A manual for local authorities on participatory planning and budgeting has been drafted to guide implementation and monitoring of the Community Development Plans. This manual may serve as a reference also for other LG units which have R/E communities in their territories *(See Annex 2.6 Manual on Participatory Planning and Budgeting)*

Meanwhile 16 consultative and informative sessions have been facilitated with experts on education, housing, employment, social welfare and legal aid, who have provided answers to over 130 R/E participating individuals in three regions. The practice of organizing such sessions has been included in the operational guidelines for community centers that are being constructed in Korca, Pogradec and Berat. *(See Annex 2.7 Operational Guidelines for Intercultural Community Centers)*

2.6 Identify, select and implement nine Community Upgrading Projects

The infrastructure component of the Action has been progressing well with six projects in completion or tendering phase. In addition, as noted earlier in the report MoSWY has requested a partial reallocation of 90,000 EUR from the infrastructure fund for rehabilitation of the Transitory Center for Emergencies in Tirana, established recently in response to housing needs of Roma evicted families. While reallocation is pending formal approval from EUD, project team has already taken measures to inform respective LGs about such an amendment, leading to a lower number of infrastructure projects in the three regions.

To date, works for reconstruction of Kindergarten and School Library in Novosela have been finalized; construction of Berat kindergarten-health center-community center is in its final stage while technical documentation has been finalized for Community Center and Sports Ground in Korca, Intercultural Social Center in Pogradec, and roads rehabilitation in Shushica and Morava.

Local contribution has been committed both in kind and financial. Several LG units (i.e. Novosela and Shushica Communes, as well as Pogradec and Korca Municipalities) have contributed with preparation of technical design, implementation of certain volume of works in infrastructure interventions as well as by reaffirming operationalization and hiring of R/E staff as relevant. Financial contribution is also planned by certain LG units (i.e. Berat and Korca Municipalities). *(See Annex 2.8 Project Fiches for Prioritized Infrastructure Projects)*

Construction of kindergarten, health and community center in Berat municipality;

The building facility of the kindergarten, healthcare and community center has been constructed and project will provide furniture as needed. Meanwhile municipality has approved the 20 % financial contribution which will be transferred to UNDP in early 2014 and planed the hiring of a qualified R/E individual as staff of community center. Regional Education and Health Directorates have also committed to provide necessary staff and materials respectively at kindergarten and health center. The multi-functional facility is expected to be inaugurated in first months of 2014 and will benefit 200 Roma and several non-Roma families.

Rehabilitation of kindergarten and library of nine-year school in Novosela commune/Vlora;

The kindergarten and school library have been fully rehabilitated. Complementary furniture will be provided by project while Novosela Commune has 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 will be responsible for the investment's maintenance and running costs while there is no need for additional staff to be employed for the kindergarten. The inauguration ceremony will take place in early 2014 benefiting 50 Roma and over 100 non-Roma families living in Novosela.

Rehabilitation of the Intercultural Social Center (Roma Corner within the City Cultural Center) in Pogradec Municipality;

The tendering process after a long extension due to lack of responsive offers, has been finalized and the works are expected to start within January 2014. Municipality of Pogradec has contributed with preparation of technical design and committed to hire R/E staff and cover maintenance costs.

Reconstruction of Kindergarten-Healthcare-Community Services facility has been taken over by commune while Project will construct the main road in Roma neighborhood in Morava/Otllak Commune

The first priority selected by CCFs was the rebuilding of a facility where currently are offered kindergarten, healthcare as well as primarily school services for Roma children. The rebuilding of the facility raised up several property issues with Otllak Commune which required lengthy court procedures, not guaranteeing a positive solution within the life time of the project.

In such circumstances, Project team agreed with Commune and Roma CCFs to move to the second priority that is construction of the main road in Roma neighborhood under the commitment of Otllak commune to repair the existing facility of kindergarten-health center-community services as well as facilitate the transferring of segregated Roma classes into the mainstream school. The newly appointed Director of Regional Education Directorate has been informed about the need for transferring of the segregated classes and has committed to authorize the necessary actions. Meanwhile, Otllak Commune is preparing technical documentation for

road construction to be tendered within first months of 2014.

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

Although the intercultural center and sports ground are two separate priorities, R/E CCFs and Korca Municipality decided to focus on the two interventions simultaneously due to the fact that they are situated in the same place and more importantly they have a complementary role to one another. Both the intercultural center and sport ground will be a comprehensive tool, administered by Municipal Social Service for empowering R/E communities and encouraging cultural exchange with the non-R/E.

Technical documentation for construction of the center has undergone several adjustments while the process has been delayed also due to partial local elections in Korca municipality resulting with the new Mayor receiving office only in the last weeks. The municipality will contribute with a significant amount of works as well as financially if the actual cost of two priorities exceeds 100,000 EUR. In addition, the municipality will take over the running costs as well as the hiring of an R/E qualified individual as part of Center's staff. The tendering process is expected to finalize within first quarter of 2014.

Reconstruction of road in historic quarter of Vlora inhabited by Egyptians

CCFs and municipality identified the reconstruction of the road as a first priority which was very much linked with the proper functioning of the water supply in the quarter. Project team facilitated communication between municipality and water administration enterprise, in order to assess the feasibility of the project, expected to have a high cost. While the consultations are on-going, Project has been requested by MoSWY to reallocate about 90 thousand EUR from the infrastructure component, for rehabilitation of the Transitory Center for Emergencies in Tirana.

Although under the new circumstances Project is not able to further rehabilitation of the road in the historic quarter "Partizani" in Vlora as previously planned, all efforts are being made that such priority be addressed by the municipality of Vlora. CCFs with support of project will raise such priority in the forthcoming participatory budgeting process to be organized by municipality.

Rehabilitation of Roma neighborhood road and its lightening system, Shushica commune:

First priority identified by CCFs and commune was construction of a Community Center next to the village school. However, given the small size of Shushica commune and local economic difficulties the construction of the center raised serious questions on maintenance cost thus jeopardizing its sustainability. For this reason, CCFs and commune proposed to move to the second priority that of rehabilitation of the road in Roma neighborhood, which would have a more visible impact on the lives of Roma inhabitants while having

affordable maintenance cost for the local authorities.

Currently Shushica Commune has finalized technical documentation for road rehabilitation confirming in kind contribution consisting in installation of the lighting system and planting of trees in the sidewalks. The tendering process has been launched and works will commence in first months of 2014.

Table 1: CUP projects agreed for co-financing

Table 1: CUP projects agreed for co-financing		
Areas	CUP identified and agreed for co-finding with LGs	Status
Berat Municipality, Berat Region	Construction of kindergarten/health/community center in Berat municipality.	Works close to completion. Inauguration within first quarter of 2014
Commune of Novesela, Vlora Region	Rehabilitation of kindergarten and library of nine-years school in Novosela commune/Vlora	Works completed. Inauguration within first quarter of 2014
Municipality of Pogradec, Korca Region	Rehabilitation of Roma Corner at the City Cultural Center in Pogradec municipality.	Tender finalized, works to start in January 2014
Otlak Commune, Berat Regions	Construction of main road in Roma neighborhood in Morava/Otlak.	Technical design and tendering of road to be completed by first quarter 2014
Korca Municipality, Korca Region	Construction of Community Intercultural Center and Sports Ground in Korca municipality.	Tendering process to be finalized within first quarter of 2014
Shushica Commune	Construction of the neighbourhood road in Roma community in Shushica Commune	Technical documentation and tendering to be finalized during first months of 2014

WP3. Strengthening civil society capacity to combat discrimination

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

A capacity and training needs assessment has been conducted for local Roma and Egyptian NGOs and activists, based on which a comprehensive training and coaching programme has been developed for enabling them to combat discrimination.

The assessment highlights the need for further strengthening the institutional capacities of existing and newly-established Roma/Egyptian organization. In particular emphasis is put on project cycle management, monitoring and reporting; effective partnering in lobbying and fundraising, advocacy campaigning on key social inclusion practices related to social housing, school segregation, employment subsidies, social services etc; networking of local activists and R/E community leaders in remote areas with well-established NGOs in main cities, strengthening cooperation with local authorities for greater participation in local planning processes.

The report highlights the establishment of new organizations by young and educated members of the community as a positive change factor and the need for fostering cooperation among new and traditional leaders. Based on the findings and recommendations identified in the assessment, a comprehensive training and coaching programme has been designed covering institutional development, existing fiscal framework and reporting, project management and implementation, communications, fundraising, partnering, networking and coalition building, minority rights protection, human rights and non-discrimination and community case management. (*See Annex3.1 Capacity and Training Assessment Report on R/E NGOs*)

Thirteen R/E civil society organizations operating in the regions of Korca, Berat and Vlora have been assisted with a comprehensive training and coaching programme involving over 30 R/E individuals. The assistance aimed at strengthening capacities and equipping several leaders, staff and volunteers of Roma and Egyptian NGOs with a set of skills and competences that they can use in their work through advocacy, policy development and service provision for the R/E communities in partnership with non R/E NGOs and local communities in preparing and implementing community development projects. The training curricula contained 12 topics including organizational management, project management, financial management, lobbying and advocacy, networking, human rights, etc, as identified from the needs assessment report, prior to the start of this project. The respective training sessions were delivered during the period July – October 2013 and followed by coaching for drafting project proposals and responding to specific needs of each organization. *Annex 3.2 Report on Training and Coaching Programme provided to R/E NGOs*)

Training manuals utilized during the training have been upgraded and R/E NGOs are guided to document and utilize them in trainings and capacity building exercises for their staff in the future. The training manuals will be available online also via the EU Information Offices in the country. The training and coaching assistance to R/E civil society organizations was provided in collaboration with National Center for Community Services (NCCS) a professional organization with great experience in training and coaching services and quite involved in R/E initiatives. (*See Annex 3.3 Training Manuals adjusted and utilized for R/E NGOs*)

Support provided to R/E NGOs got the attention of journalists for its genuine and comprehensive approach. One of the independent newspapers (*Gazeta Shqip* <http://gazeta-shqip.com/lajme/2013/11/10/une-jam-si-jul/>) published an article on the concrete results of assistance benefiting R/E civil society organizations.

3.2 Support collaboration of R/E NGOs and non R/E NGOs

While R/E NGOs are enhancing their institutional capacities in implementing small development initiatives, a follow up call for proposals is being launched aiming to encourage their collaboration with professional non-R/E NGOs. This process will be preceded by the organization of bank of ideas event with a focus on non-discrimination and tolerance aiming to strengthen the mutual trust and exchange between R/E and non-R/E organizations. Three best joint proposals of R/E and non-R/E organizations resulting from the bank of ideas will be supported for implementation in early 2014.

3.3 Preparation and Launching of the Small Grant Program

The small grants programme comes in follow up of a comprehensive training and coaching package tailored as per the capacity and training needs assessment on R/E organizations. The purpose of the small grants programme is to provide R/E civil society organizations with effective and sustainable capacities for fighting against discrimination and social exclusion on the ground of ethnic belongingness.

A call for proposal was launched during November 2013 accompanied by comprehensive guidelines on preparation of the proposals as well as templates for grant application form, budget, partnership agreement, interim and final narrative and financial reports. These templates and guiding documents have been prepared in Albanian language tailored as per the needs and capacities of R/E Civil Society Organizations while reflecting standards applied by traditional donors' organizations. The call has been focused on priority areas of the Decade of Roma Inclusion, such as education, health, employment, social inclusion and equal opportunities. R/E NGOs 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 of partnership, based on local R/E needs. (See Annex 3.4 Call for Proposal Package)

Thirteen out of seventeen received proposals have been selected for funding based on the eligibility and evaluation criteria announced at the call for proposal guidelines. According to the criteria project ensured support to properly established organizations led by R/E individuals and proposals which provided an appropriate, coherent, realistic, sustainable and cost-effective intervention. The geographic distribution of 13 selected proposals by R/E NGOs involves 7 in Korca, 4 in Berat and 2 in Vlora region. The amount provided to each NGO is around 1 mln ALL each (approx. 10,000 USD) for small initiatives implemented from January till October 2014. During the implementation, R/E NGOs will be assisted and monitored by the project team through a shared monitoring calendar. Project is offering coaching assistance for preparation of interim and final narrative/ financial reports to all 13 R/E NGOs. (See Annex 3.5 Selection Report for Grants to R/E NGOs)

SUMMARY OF PROJECTS PROVIDED WITH SMALL GRANTS

in

Support of Roma and Egyptian organizations' activities aiming at social inclusion of respective communities, in regions where "Supporting the Social Inclusion of R/E Communities" is being implemented (Berat, Korca and Vlore)

No.	NGO NAME	TOTAL UNDP CONTRIBUTION	PROJECT TITLE	PROJECT LOCATION	DURATION OF PROJECT
1	Egyptian Brotherhood Association	998,000 ALL	Empowerment of Roma and Egyptian Women and their rights for employment through capacity building.	Bucimas	6 January 2014 - 31 October 2014
2	Amato Drom	965,300 ALL	Social inclusion of Roma minority through enhancement of access to public services, focusing especially on civil registration.	Korce, Morave (Berat), Novosele (Vlore)	6 January 2014 - 5 October 2014
3	Ditsuni Albania	999,200 ALL	Capacity building for young Roma and Egyptian individuals in mass media. Capacities enhanced in reporting on the areas of education, health and antidiscrimination.	Korce, Berat, Vlore	6 January 2014 - 31 October 2014
4	Roma Women for Development Center (RWDC Albania)	1,000,000 ALL	Enabling access to health care for socially excluded individuals through informative sessions and medical consultations.	Novosela and Shushica communes, Vlore region	6 January 2014 - 31 October 2014
5	United Roma Association	925,000 ALL	Awareness Campaign for enhancing the educational level of Roma children in Morava.	Morave, Berat region	6 January 2014 - 31 October 2014
6	Voice of Roma in Albania	942,400 ALL	Return to School- Awareness rising of Roma children and youth in Novosela Commune on the importance of education.	Novosela Commune, Vlore	6 January 2014 - 31 October 2014
7	Partner – Terre des homes AMARE ROMA	861,000 ALL	Empowering Roma and Egyptian parents for social integration through participation and local policies on reducing school dropout.	Korce	6 January 2014 - 31 October 2014
8	Egyptian Association "Sfinksi"	1,000,000 ALL	Raising awareness of the public institutions on the problems and needs of Egyptian and Roma communities.	Berat region	6 January 2014 - 31 October 2014
9	Romano Sezi Partner NGO-Integrimi Rinor Komunitar-Korce	987,000 ALL	Capacity building of Roma and Egyptian youth in the decision-making through advocacy, lobbying and coalition building with local government institutions.	Korce	6 January 2014 - 31 October 2014
10	Rromani Baxt brach Korca, Albania Partner – Korca Municipality	1,000,000 ALL	Capacity building for recycling and urban remaining/waste differentiation.	Korce	6 January 2014 - 5 August 2014
11	Roma Women of Tomorrow	977,000 ALL	Roma women empowerment and capacity building for greater involvement in the society.	Berat	6 January 2014 - 5 September 2014
12	Roma Reality in Albania (CERA)	978,000 ALL	Roma community inclusion as a necessity in the local democracy development process. Active Participation of Roma individuals in local decision making processes.	Pogradec	6 January 2014 - 31 October 2014
13	Association of Embroidery Partner – DMO, Regional Employment office	998,000 ALL	Economic empowerment of R/E women, and their rights for employment through skills enhancement and awareness rising.	Korce	6 January 2014 - 31 October 2014

WP4. Job and Entrepreneurship Promotion

4.1 R/E Employment and business assessment

An assessment of R/E individuals on employment and entrepreneurship has been conducted in three regions related to the challenges and opportunities of R/E job-seekers, artisans as well as potential entrepreneurs. The findings of the assessment call for orienting the support on non-traditional VET and craft works towards small income generation activities, rather than formal business development. Report emphasizes the fact that formalization of fragile and non-competitive business requires more time than project life while unsuccessful entrepreneurs may lose the social welfare and the opportunity to return if their activity does not survive. This is negatively affected also by the high level of informality in the country. The assessment report suggested partnering with local professional service providers which have the capacities to sustain employment and entrepreneurial services to R/E artisans, job-seekers and small entrepreneurs upon project closure. The assessment study provides a useful reference document for the project as well as for other future interventions. *(See Annex 4.1 Job and Entrepreneurship Assessment Report on R/E Communities)*

4.2 Support and Coaching R/E businesses

Three regional workshops were organized in Korca, Berat and Vlora during July 2013 with the aim of identifying challenges and opportunities of R/E VET trainees, artisans and potential small entrepreneurs. These workshops identified the need for bridging the gap between R/E individuals (trainees, artisans and entrepreneurs) and local service providers (VET centers, provision of raw materials, marketing agencies, as well as supporters of income-generation activities or micro-crediting institutions). They helped to document existing practices in each region allowing for better tailor-made and coordinated assistance from the project to R/E individuals. The workshops were a good opportunity for creating new links and coaching of R/E individuals, with regional professional service providers. *(See Annex 4.2 Activity Reports for Regional Workshops on R/E Employment)*

Several R/E NGOs particularly in Korca have been encouraged to assist R/E artisans with marketing their products, by facilitating their participation in competitions organized by artisan associations as well as organization of craftwork fairs. Project has continued to assist 40 R/E artisans with product design and encouraging their participation in several fairs as well as networking them with professional associations for sustaining the survival in the challenging market of craft works. About 40 R/E artisans producing pottery, baskets, embroidery, and blacksmith products have

Five craftwork fairs organized linked with commemoration of marked days, where R/E artisans marketed their works:
 With the occasion of project launching (Korca, July 11, 2012);
 Commemoration of International Roma day (Tirana, April 8, 2013);
 The annual spring artisan fair (Korca April 20 – May 5, 2013);
 Commemoration of October 24, 2013 UN day in Tirana,.
 Small Medium Enterprise (SME) days event in November 4-5, 2013 (organized in collaboration with Regional Council of Korca as well as GIZ and other local organizations);

participated in the fairs. A brochure with their products and contacts has been produced and disseminated in Tirana and in the regions, including here travel agencies, hotels and restaurants frequented by tourists and potential clients. Taking part in fairs and having their products and contacts displayed at the Artisan Brochure or by the social media, several artisans, particularly from Pogradec and Korca report an increase of demands for their pottery, straw and embroidery products. (See Annex 4.3 R/E Artizans Brochure)

In addition, artisans of Korca (the region with more potential in craftwork and with a higher number of artisans) are assisted to participate in a regional competition for craftwork design, organized with support of GIZ and Municipality of Korca. The product 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 product by the souvenir traders, thus increasing the production and income generation for the Egyptian Embroidery Association.

In addition a two-days training on product design and marketing has been organized by Project during 14 -15 December 2013. The training was held in Korca and brought together about 30 R/E 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 of innovative craft products and their marketing. The training was delivered by Destination Management Organization (DMO) a professional organization operating in the area of tourism and artisan products. A calendar with cultural events in various cities where craft products are usually marketed has been produced and R/E artisans will be assisted in partnership with DMO to attend such events and bring their better designed and more marketable craft works. (See Annex 4.4 Report on Training of R/E Artisans)

A guidebook with 100 innovative ideas for self-employment has been prepared and will be introduced in three workshops with R/E youth and local stakeholders in each region. Three workshops will generate local debates on how R/E youth could utilize innovative ideas and make feasible business plans which could be supported by project and/or financial institutions. The workshops will be organized in close collaboration with National Employment Service and their subordinated regional employment offices in three regions. (See Annex 4.5 Manual on Hundred Innovative Ideas for Self-Employment)

In Vlora and Berat regions, project has started to assist 60 R/E individuals to explore self-employment and entrepreneurship potentials. The assistance involves on the job training, technical assistance in developing business plans, provision of coaching and toolkits for start-up businesses. In addition, technical assistance will also consist in drafting local policy briefs proposing tax relief and/or exemption for a certain period for income generation activities run by R/E individuals as well as non-interruption of social welfare until such economic activities of R/E individuals are consolidated.

In Korca, Project is considering to provide similar entrepreneurial services to additional 30 R/E individuals. Training and coaching support will take place during January – November 2014 and will lead among others in utilization of several innovative self-employment ideas.

4.3 Promoting Employment

Orientation sessions on vocational trainings have been offered to over 60 R/E individuals (30 in Korca and Pogradec, 15 in Berat and 15 in Vlora) majority of which have shown interest to attend three to five months vocational training courses in various areas, such as barber, tailor, IT, cook and hairdresser. This input together with the job and entrepreneurship assessment completed in August 2013, paved the road for partnering with local professional service providers in respective regions.

Project has agreed with professional service provider (AULEDA) in Vlora and Berat while negotiating with RDA in Korca to train and hire 6 R/E individuals (2 in each region, one female and another male) as part of the project team in providing self-employment coaching services to their over 90 R/E peers. According to this arrangements R/E recruits will get qualification and benefit formal employment for at least one year, after which based on their performance and if organizations financial situation allows, will either be offered a permanent job, or get the unemployment benefit for another year. This is an effort to promote employment of R/E in organizations providing services to R/E communities.

6 R/E young individuals from Korca, Berat and Vlora after being trained as journalists, camera operators and video production have been hired by Disutni Albania, (a Roma NGO in Korca) to prepare Roma program which is 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 R/E 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 R/E individuals to undergo job interviews and become familiar with labor market requirements. *(See Annex 4.6 Report on Job Fair held in Korca)*

Last but not the least, Project has supported 2 R/E university graduates (a male and female) as Facilitators for Protection from Discrimination who have been hosted as fellows respectively by Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination and People's Advocate. These individuals have been trained and supported in a previous fellowship by OSCE/BPRI, an EU funded project and under the present 6 months contract with UNDP are expected to consolidate their work experience which will increase their chances for getting hired permanently by People's Advocate and CPD. Meanwhile, Project is lobbying with involved institutions that such positions are sustained respectively.

4.4 Monitoring and Recalibration of Support

The R/E employment and entrepreneurial assessment introduced earlier in the report, serves as a basis for project to provide adequate and feasible support to R/E 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 partnering of R/E community members with professionalized local service providers in each region.

In addition, continual monitoring will ensure adequate recalibration of support in the area of employment and entrepreneurship. In this regards, Project will take advantage of the expertise in other UNDP projects focusing on youth employment, to better link the self-employment assistance to R/E individuals with mid and long-term services provided by National Employment Service.

Last but not least, while the artisan and entrepreneurial assistance to poorly educated R/E individuals is oriented to small income generation and self-employment initiatives, Project is increasingly considering promoting employment of educated R/E individuals in public administration and/or in professional organizations.

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

5.1 Supporting the Social Inclusion Department at MoSWY

During September – December 2012, the SSIREC Project assisted the Social Inclusion Department (formerly Technical Secretariat on Roma) to organize training of 15 (5 from each of 3 regions) local officials on the newly established ROMALB monitoring and reporting system. Regional Councils and regional directorates of education, health, employment, social service are responsible to enter data periodically in the system and project team in three regions has assisted them to enter data and operate the system in coordination with then Technical Secretariat on Roma (currently the Social Inclusion Department).

(SSIREC team has provided advisory support to then Technical Secretariat on Roma for organizing two consultation workshops during February 2013, one with government institutions and the other with civil society organizations, as part of the consultation process on the future of the Roma Decade beyond 2015. As a result, both government and civil society organizations provided their inputs on how the actions targeting Roma should be tailored after 2015. A detailed report is expected by the central Decade Secretariat in Budapest, however, the recommendation provided almost unanimously during consultations called for continuation of the Decade and its alignment with EU 2020 initiative in support of Roma in member states.

June 2013's 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 Social Inclusion Department. The reform led to staff reduction which has slowed down the operationalization of the ROMALB data reporting system from regional authorities to line ministries. Despite this, as mentioned earlier under WP 2, section 2. 3, Project facilitated meetings of Roma Technical Sub-Committees in the regions of Vlora and Berat where the concern of data reporting was thoroughly discussed.

Project currently is discussing with the MoSWY for aligning its assistance as per the needs and responsibilities

of the Social Inclusion Department while pursuing the approval of the web-based data reporting system (ROMALB) by Council of Ministers and aligning the national Roma inclusion policies with the EU 2020 Platform for Roma.

In addition, in response to the alarming situation of evicted Roma families in Tirana Project has been assisting MoSWY to set up and operationalize the Transitory Center for Emergencies (TCE) where currently 53 Roma evicted families have been sheltered with the aim of empowering and integrating these families in the mainstream society. As per the request of MoSWY, project is expecting the final decision from EUD for the reallocation of necessary fund from its infrastructure component under WP2 towards the rehabilitation of the TCE while at the same time providing technical advice on ensuring sustainability.

5.2 Supporting institutions responsible for protection from discrimination

A legal manual on how to deal with claims of discrimination based on ethnicity with a special focus on Roma, has been drafted providing comprehensive guideline to staff of commissioner. The manual focuses on legal framework, case law of national and international courts, as well as police and practice involving Roma issues. In a parallel process the Office of the Commissioner will be assisted in updating the standard complain format with user friendly information in order to facilitate the process of filling the required information by R/E citizens. (See Annex 5.2 Legal manual on R/E Cases prepared for CPD)

Meanwhile a community outreach plan is being finalized containing a calendar of public events where staff of Commissioner will be providing assistance and awareness raising in the field in close consultation with R/E NGOs in the regions.

Training sessions have been planned for Commissioner Staff respectively on the legal matters as well as community outreach strategies followed by organization of public events in respective regions. Informative flyer on services and relevant procedures for obtaining services of the Commissioner, tailored in a user-friendly manner is also being produced to be shared widely in respective communities.

Legal assistance has been provided to People's Advocate for drafting of three legal amendments on social housing, transfer of residence as well as economic aid. The amendments have been widely consulted with R/E civil society organizations and are submitted to respective line ministries. The proposed amendments simplify key criteria for R/E individuals related to access in social housing, transferring of residence and obtaining the economic aid. Although the introduced amendment will have a positive impact on the lives of Roma evicted families residing in Tirana, yet they need to be followed by directives and informative campaigns in order to ensure their effective implementation. (Annex 5.3 Legal Amendments on Social Housing, Transfer of Residence and Economic Aid proposed by People's Advocate)

As mentioned earlier in the report, project has supported two R/E university graduates, as Facilitators for Protection from Discrimination for a six-month term hosted by the Commissioner and People's Advocate.

Meanwhile, negotiations are taking place to have these positions become part of permanent structure of respective institutions.

WP6. Awareness Raising and Information Campaign

6.1 Preparation of the Communication Strategy and Action Plan

A Communication Strategy and Action Plan has been prepared at the project start having due consideration of the EU visibility Guidelines. Among others, it calls for establishing of a network of Cultural Diversity Goodwill Ambassadors composed of prominent non-Roma personalities from the areas of art, sport and media as well as of R/E role models who would be involved in project activities to give a stronger message of social inclusion and respect for diversity. Actions envisaged in this strategy are accompanied by the slogan “you and me - Equal in Diversity”. Particular attention has been given to implementation of EU Visibility Guidelines as well as ensuring due recognition and ownership of partner institutions at central and local level. (*See Annex 6.1 SSIREC Communications Strategy*)

Communication Strategy and Action Plan has been a guiding document for communicating project results to beneficiaries, media and the general public. The involvement of successful R/E youth as well as their non-R/E peers has contributed towards greater acceptance in society reducing prejudices and discriminatory attitude against socially excluded minorities.

6.2 Implementing a national awareness and advocacy campaign

The awareness and educational activities have become an integral part of many other project components. As part of the campaign, three football teams have been established, one in each region composed of R/E young men, who periodically organize thematic football matches in mixed teams with participation of artists, local authorities, police, journalists etc. with the aim of promoting intercultural exchanges amongst various minority and majority groups. To date, there have been 3 football matches (one in each region) where mixed teams have been wearing sport uniforms with the slogan You & I Equal in Diversity.

Several volunteer-involving activities such as cleaning of territories, planting of trees in neighborhoods, school yards and other public places have been organized, with the occasion of internationally and national marked days i.e. environment day, voluntarism day, anti-discrimination day and the like. Throughout these activities, R/E volunteers have partnered with other volunteer-involving organizations operating in the areas of environment and youth participation. Animators organized games for children and parents in three regions making use of Roma and Albanian symbols, leading to recognition and appreciation of respective symbols flags, colors etc. These activities have organized on regular basis by CCFs in collaboration with R/E NGOs as well as other local partner organizations.

The Project has produced a TV documentary titled “Equal in Diversity” with interviews of Goodwill Ambassadors and R/E role models, which has been screened on TVSH and posted in social media. Another documentary titled “when dreams become reality” has been produced focusing on the dream of a talented young Roma to stage the “Les Miserables” in Albanian reflecting Roma motives. (See Annex 6.2 Copies of TV Documentary on R/E in DVD)

Social Inclusion of R/E Communities in Albania was discussed and debated on April 8 2013 with the occasion of the International Roma Day, in a high profile TV show called “Duel” on the Albanian Public TV which is aired prime time. The show featured SSIREC Project Manager, Commissioner for Protection from Discrimination, Head of Technical Secretariat for Roma, Roma/Egyptian Civil society representative as well as R/E students and graduates and their non-R/E peers. The show provided an excellent opportunity to identify challenges faced by R/E Communities, but at the same time highlighted the assistance given by UNDP with the EU support and Albanian Government in this regard. Direct beneficiaries of the programme were also invited at the show.

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 or Doctor Flori, Well know 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

Meanwhile, on April 8, nine prominent personalities from the world of art, literature, academia and media were announced as Goodwill Ambassadors for Cultural Diversity in Albania.

The announced personalities use 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.

As series of awareness raising activities were organized in the framework of the Roma Values Week, to mark the International Roma Day (8-12 April 2013). The calendar of activities included the annual inter-cultural artisan fair (8 April); A National Conference “Accurate Data – Relevant Policies” in the Framework of National Action Plan for the Decade of Roma Inclusion (9 April); R/E youth performed “*Les Miserables*” theatre at the University of Arts (11 April). At community Center “TEN” in Tirana, human rights documentaries and Roma movies were screened for a wide audience. A new documentary on the Roma cultural heritage with messages from Cultural Diversity Goodwill Ambassadors and Role models was broadcasted in the public TV channel (TVSH).

The putting on stage of “*Les Miserables*” by R/E students was an innovative means of promoting the cultural values of the R/E communities as well as preservation and development of their identity 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. The drama was conducted by Mr. Ram Hadroj, an Albanian Roma Student, who graduated from Andrews University Michigan with a Bachelor of Sciences in Behavioral Sciences (2010) and was directed by Mrs. Aneta Malaj a well-known professor at the University of Arts. In his opening remarks Mr. Hadroj highlighted the influential message of the drama: “There is nothing like a dream to create the future”. Mr. Hadroj emphasized the fact that by putting on stage the drama in Albanian he had realized one of his longstanding dreams.

The Project has established a Facebook account (UNDP Albania-Supporting Social Inclusion of Roma and Egyptian Communities) where activities of the project are portrayed and shared with social networks. The Facebook page also serves as a tool for promoting inclusion and acceptance while appreciating the values and cultural heritage of the Roma and Egyptian communities in Albania.

A network of R/E NGOs, students and activities from all over the country has been established and 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 MDG deadline. The consultations process across the country under the motto “The Future We want” has been part of an unprecedented global consultation which aimed to build consensus between people, communities, cities, countries stakeholders and groups that usually don’t participate in multilateral negotiations - on what are in their view key development priorities. Several R/E youth and community members have been part of such open debates and discussions focusing on issues related to youth employment, environment and inequalities, giving their vision for the future and voicing their ideas in several televised citizens panels organized.

Three quarterly newsletters have been prepared in Albanian and English, highlighting R/E active involvement of both male and female in local planning and in the participatory budgeting processes as well as in various

awareness campaigns. (See Annex 6.3 Three Editions of quarterly SSIREC Newsletter)

Various media sources (*i.e. Gazeta Express, Gazeta Panorama, and Gazeta Shqip*) have presented results of the project particularly in raising capacities and empowering R/E civil society organizations as well as artisans, job-seekers and potential entrepreneurs.

Social media has been regularly utilized for drawing public attention on successful R/E individuals who with their involvement in project activities have increased their skills and been offered greater opportunities in areas of education and employment.

Following Project negotiations with the National Albanian Television (TVSH) and Disutni Albania (a Roma NGO in Korca producing Roma TV programmes) it was agreed to broadcast bi-weekly for the first time a programme in Romani language. The first broadcast in TVSH started on December 26th 2013 in Roma language with Albanian subtitles, which will be disseminated also via YouTube.

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.

RISKS, COUNTER MEASURES, AND WAYS FORWARD

Risks and Countermeasures

Project team has been cautious about risks mitigation by implementing respective countermeasures and make up for startup delays as well as political changes due to parliamentary elections, adopting R/E self-employment as entrepreneurial circumstances in the country, filling communications gaps between R/E and non-R/E population.

Risk 1. Delays in staff recruitment and setting up offices in the regions, preparation and signing of a higher number of Memorandum of Understandings with respective local authorities as per the number of intervention areas within three selected regions.

Countermeasure 1: Project Manager in close consultation with Programme Analyst assess the relevance of delayed activities and reflect that in the annual planning, whenever possible simplifying and grouping said activities in compliance with agreed requirements ensuring that output quality is duly maintained. New timing of delayed activities gets reflected in the updated annual work plan.

Risk 2: Benefits of formalization of R&E small businesses may not be 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 social assistance with no prospects of getting back in if the business does not succeed. The economic situation is subject to changing conditions which might make the development of business activities more difficult both at national and local level. The preliminary findings of the employment and entrepreneurship assessment stress that registration of newly set up R/E income-generation activities may not survive the competition, while threatening the R/E (small traders and artisans) with cutting of social welfare.

Countermeasure 2: The project will assess regularly the economic situation and provide additional support where needed in order to adapt businesses develop support to entrepreneurial circumstances. As concluded at the assessment, project will try to orient its support to self-employment and small income-generation activities rather than formally registered business, while strengthening the links between R/E individuals and local professionalized service providers.

Risk 3: Parliamentary elections of June 2013 may slow down the process of project implementation during the few months before and after elections, due to changes in political representatives and very likely also in the administration as well as possibility that new government staff may not be aware of the current plans of

the project and of the work of the organization focusing on Roma social inclusion.

Countermeasure 3: After parliamentary elections, project manager and if necessary with support of programme staff will meet the newly appointed officials of de-concentrated offices of central governments at local level and renew the respective LG's commitment to cooperate with SSIREC project.

Risk 4: Certain R/E Communities may not be open to dialogue and willing to actively collaborate in the project, while the rest of Albanian society and representatives of authorities have a biased image of R/E people. The marginalized conditions of R/E Communities in Albania and the fact that they are perceived as second-class citizens might hamper project efforts towards social inclusion of R/E vulnerable communities.

Countermeasure 4: Close collaboration with R/E civil society organizations as well as other community based organizations operating at local level will facilitate project activities. Project manager and coordinators in three regions will establish close collaboration with civil society organizations and R/E community leaders.

Other challenges

After several discussions with previous MoLSAEO, related to obtaining the GoA contribution to the project budget (45,000 Euro) this challenge has been addressed and the respective fund has been transferred to UNDP by present MoSWY. The contribution from Albanian Government was received in 25 October 2013 in the amount of 6,000,000 ALL, equal to 42,437.62 €, while the approved project budget stipulates 45,000 € as GoA contribution to SSIREC project. In order not to change the total amount of the budget, 1,695,000 €, UNDP will add the difference of 2,562.38 € into its contribution, which now amounts to 152,562.38 €.

The political changes deriving from parliamentary elections of June 2013 have resulted in the restructuring of MoSWY where the Technical Secretariat on Roma no longer exists. Social Inclusion Department has resumed the monitoring of the National Action Plan of Roma Decade. This fact has hampered the ROMALB data reporting system and the functioning of the regional committee on assessment of social needs and their subordinated Technical Sub-committee on Roma issues.

Changes introduced in implementation

No changes have been introduced to date.

LESSONS LEARNED

Social inclusion of R/E is often not viewed as a priority by local authorities, while national priorities are not fully observed. Working simultaneously with central and local governments has built a common understanding of both levels on the R/E social inclusion priorities, leading to better coordinated actions for implementation and monitoring of relevant actions. The 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 example of this lesson learned.

The preliminary findings of the employment and entrepreneurship assessment report stress that registration of newly set up R/E income-generation activities may not survive the competition, while threatening the R/E (small traders and artisans) with cutting of social welfare. This said, Project is considering orienting its assistance in self-employment and income-generation rather than assisting formal registration of businesses run by R/E individuals.

An exclusive focus on R/E vulnerability and non-discrimination is often increasing stigma and marginalization of these communities. In response, Project has focused more on the promotion of positive models and appreciation of cultural values of R/E, which in turn is diminishing the stereotypes and creating more acceptance and inclusion. Portraying another image for R/E through the organization of Roma values week, as well as broadcasting of the documentary with R/E role models have contributed to a broader positive acceptance of R/E in the society.

Despite the fact that there is no formal commitment of LGUs for financial contribution expressed in the Description and Budget of the Action, the project team has encouraged the LGUs to allocate a financial contribution of approximately 20% for all CUP investments taking place in the territory under their jurisdiction. Though most of the LGUs agreed to contribute financially for the realization of CUP, it is becoming obvious that for some of the LGUs the financial contribution is not possible due to serious budget cuts in local government budgets during 2013. The project team is in regular contacts with LGUs to identify possible ways for in kind contribution or other support from municipality staff or enterprises for the infrastructure projects.

The involvement of qualified R/E individuals in public administration and as part of local professional organization and vesting in them the status of service providers conversely to being always the targeted group, has proved to lead to greater self-sufficiency, reflecting another dimension of social inclusion. In this perspective, project has encouraged R/E University graduates as well as experienced and low-skilled workers to be part of service delivery teams in in three regions.

PARTNERS, COOPERATION AND VISIBILITY

Partners and Cooperation

Continuous cooperation in implementing project activities has been maintained with other partner organizations targeting R/E social inclusion while ensuring local ownership over project results.

In this regard, Project has regularly cooperated with OSCE/ODIHR Best Practices for Roma Integration; Council of Europe's Projects on Roma Mediators, and Inclusive Education and Minority Protection, as well as other projects implemented by local NGOs such as Help for Children Foundation, SHKEJ, and Vlora Youth Center with support of EU or other donors.

Additionally, Project is cooperating with local professional service providers such as, AULEDA in Vlora and Berat, and Regional Development Agency (RDA) in Korca in providing job and entrepreneurship services to R/E job-seekers and potential entrepreneurs. More specifically AULEDA manages a guarantee fund which may help successful R/E individuals to access micro credits for income-generation activities after the SSIPREC closure. Similarly, DRA offers on regular basis assistance on social businesses and coaching support to successful entrepreneurs from which may benefit also R/E individuals after increasing their skills through SSIREC support.

To help R/E artisans in three regions with product design and marketing, Project is partnering with Destination Management Organization (DMO). This organization is specialized in craft works and tourism which would open up a new window for R/E artisans after they have upgraded the design of products with SSIREC assistance. The partnering with local professional service providers relies on the expertise that such entities provide locally as well as on their potentials for continual support to R/E beneficiaries after closure of assistance from SSIREC Project.

Project has been very sensitive to the repeated eviction cases of Roma families and has been offering advice and technical assistance to MoSWY (as well as former MoLSAEO) for establishing and making operational the Transitory Center for Emergencies. Currently at the center are sheltered 53 Roma evicted families in emergent housing situation and project is considering rehabilitation of the shelter while advising MoSWY in mid and long term measures on integration of involved Roma families.

MONITORING AND CONTROL

During the reportig period, the implementation of the project activities has been monitored through various means:

- regular contacts of the project Management with the EUD representative
- two Steering Committees meetings
- three on the spot visits by an EUD external monitor with relevant and follow up meetings
- one EUD managed ROM (Result Oriented Monitoring) mission with on the spot visits.

ANNEXES

I. Project Management:

1.1 Steering Committee Minutes

01. SSIREC Project SC Meeting 1 – Minutes (date);

- 1. Minutes (En);
- 2. Agenda (En);
- 3. Presentation (En)

02. SSIREC Project SC Meeting 2 – Minutes (date)

- 1. Minutes (En);
- 2. Agenda (En);
- 3. Presentation (En)

1.2 Relevant Correspondence:

- 01. Letter from MoSWY confirming transfer of Gov. Contribution (date);
- 02. Letter of Confirmation from LGs (date)

1.3 SSIREC Inception Report 2012;

1.4 Progress vs. Objective Matrix July 2012 – Dec 2013;

1.5 Work Plan for January – December 2014;

1.6 Financial Report July 2012 – December 2013

II. Technical Reports, Studies, as per WPs;

WP2: Participatory Planning and Infrastructure Development

2.1 Three Regional Profiles for Korca, Berat and Vlora;

2.2 Community Mobilization and Self-help Activities in three Regions;

2.3 Terms of Reference for Regional Technical Committee on Roma (RTCR);

- 2.3. (a) Activity report on Vlora RTCR meeting (date);
- 2.3. (b) Activity report on Berat RTCR (date);

2.4. MoU with LGs Units in Three regions

- 2.4. (1) Korca Municipality (date)
- 2.4. (2) Progradec Municipality (date)
- 2.4. (3) Starove Commune (date)

- 2.4. (4) Berat Municipality (date)
- 2.4. (5) Berat Regional Council (date)
- 2.4. (6) Otlak Commune (date)
- 2.4. (7) Vlora Municipality (date)
- 2.4. (8) Novosela Commune(date)
- 2.4. (9) Shushica Commune (date)
- 2.4. (10) Vlora Regional Council (date)

- 2.5 Draft Community Development Plans for three regions;

- 2.6 Manual on Participatory Planning and Budgeting for LGs;

- 2.7 Operational Guidelines for Intercultural Community Centers;

- 2.8 Project Fiches for Prioritized Infrastructure Projects
 - 2.8. (1) Kindergarten and School Library in Novosela
 - 2.8. (2) Kindergarten-Health Center-Intercultural Community Center in Berat
 - 2.8. (3) Intercultural Community Center and Sports Ground in Korca
 - 2.8. (4) Intercultural Community Center in Pogradec
 - 2.8. (5) Road Rehabilitation in Shushica
 - 2.8. (6) Road Rehabilitation in Otlak

WP 3: Capacities of R/E NGOs;

- 3.1 Capacity and Training Assessment Report on R/E NGOs;
- 3.2 Report on Training and Coaching Programme provided to R/E NGOs;
- 3.3 Training modules adjusted and utilized for R/E NGOs;
- 3.4 Call for Proposal Package;
 - 3.4. (1) Call for Proposal and Guidelines (AL)
 - 3.4. (2) Application Form (AL)
 - 3.4. (3) Budget Form (AL)
 - 3.4. (4) Self-Declaration for Belonging to R/E Communities
 - 3.4. (5) Partnership Declaration

- 3.5 Selection Report for Grants to R/E NGOs;
 - 3.5. (1) Selection Report (date)
 - 3.5. (2) Summary of Applications

WP4: Job and Entrepreneurship Promotion

- 4.1 Job and Entrepreneurship Assessment on R/E communities;
- 4.2 Activity Reports for Regional Workshops on R/E Employment
 - 4.2. (1) Vlora Report (date) ;
 - 4.2. (2) Berat Report (date)
 - 4.2. (3)Korca Report (date);
- 4.3 R/E Artisans Brochure;
- 4.4 Report on Training with R/E Artisans, Korca;
 - 4.4. (1) Training Report (data)
 - 4.4. (2) Agenda
 - 4.4. (3) Presentation
- 4.5 Manual on Hundred Innovative ideas for self-employment
- 4.6 Report on Job Fair held in Korca

WP5:Supporting Implementation of National Roma Decade Action Plan

- 5.1 Legal Manual on R/E cases prepared for CPD;
- 5.2 Legal Amendments on social housing, transfer of residence and economic aid proposed by People's Advocate

WP 6: Visibility and Communication

- 6.1 SSIREC Communication Strategy;
- 6.2 TV Documentaries in DVD;
 - 6.2. (1) Equal in Diversity;
 - 6.2. (2) When dream become reality;
- 6.3 Three editions of quarterly SSIREC Newsletter;
- 6.4 SSIREC Fast Facts Brochure
- 6.5 Copies of promotions toolkits

WORK PLAN

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

Jan – Dec 2014

	-Prepare tender dossier, contract and complete civil works for at least 9 agreed infrastructure projects; (1.1.1.2; 6.5.; 6.1.)		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	9 infrastructure projects by end of project	
	Construction of the Community Center and Rehabilitation of Sports Ground in Korca	x	W2 Tender	W3 Contract	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	W2 Inauguration	2 projects	
	Rehabilitation of Roma Corner at the City Cultural Center in Pogradec municipality	W3 Contract	x	x	W1 Inauguration	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		1 project	
	Construction of kindergarten-health center-Intercultural community center in Berat municipality	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		3 projects	Works on progress
	Rehabilitation of kindergarten and library of nine-years school in Novosela commune/Vlora	x	W2 Inag.														1 project	Works Completed
	Road rehabilitation in Roma quarter, Shushica Commune/Vlora	x	W2 Tender	W3 Contract	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	W1 Inag. x	1 project	
	Road rehabilitation in Roma quarter Morava/Otllak/Berat .	x	W3 Tender	W4 Contract	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	W4 Inag	1 project	
	Rehabilitation of Transitory Center for Emergencies in Shish-Tufina (a) reconstruction of shelter and (b) systematization of the surrounding including installment of showers), Tirana	x	x	W4 Tender	W4 Contract	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	W2 Inag	2 projects	Pending approval from EUD
Work Package 3: Strengthening Civil Society Capacity to Combat Discrimination																		
Act. 3.1. Assessment, Capacity Building & Networking of NGOs in each target region																		DONE

[illegible]

	- Prepare a brochure on "How to start-up and maintain income generation activities" tailored as per the needs and possibilities of R/E communities (5.1.3)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x								100 innovative ideas for self-Employment DONE
	- Organizing the R/E products marketing fair with occasion of International Roma Day commemorated on April 8 (5.7.13)																			3 events by end of project	DONE
	- Assist R/E artisans with specialized craft-product development (6.12)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x							during the 1st and second year	In partnership with specialized agencies
	- Assist R/E entrepreneurs with marketing guidelines, programme and actions also with regard to their participation in national and international sectorial networks/organizations (6.13)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x								In partnership with specialized agencies
Act.4.3.Promoting Employment through vocational courses and on the job training/internships	- Vocational Training provision from public and non-public institutions including professional tools costs (5.7.9 and 6.15).	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x							Expert and vocational trainings for around 30 WD	In partnership with specialized agencies
	- Facilitate on-the-job training/internships for R/E individuals (5.7.10.)		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x							Internships for additional 30 individuals - 60 individuals for vocational trainings and internships by end of project	In partnership with specialized agencies
	- Start-up kits for 30 individuals x 400 EUR (3.2.30)																				In partnership with specialized agencies
Act. 4.4. Monitoring & Recalibration of Support																				As per the assessment report;	Grouping of activities and partnering with local specialised agencies DONE



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