



WE ARE HERE TOGETHER
EUROPEAN SUPPORT FOR ROMA INCLUSION

Existing models of housing improvement for Roma
*Social and affordable housing solutions for Roma and vulnerable
population in Serbia*

OSCE Mission to Serbia

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Existing models of housing improvement for Roma - Social and affordable housing solutions for Roma and vulnerable population in Serbia

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Foreword

This study is a result of the analysis of housing models that have been implemented so far with the aim to improve the housing situation of Roma in Serbia, as part of the housing component of the project *We are here together - European support for Roma inclusion*, implemented by the OSCE Mission to Serbia to support the implementation of the Strategy for Improvement of the Status of Roma in the Republic of Serbia. The project is financed by the European Union, within the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance – IPA 2012. In addition, the project *We are here together* provides assistance to the Ministry of Construction and Urban Planning of the Republic of Serbia, *inter alia*, to develop affordable housing solutions aimed at long-term improvement of housing conditions for Roma.

According to the activity schedule agreed between the OSCE Mission to Serbia and the authors of this study, in this first phase of work the task was to identify the existing practices in the field of social and affordable housing for Roma and other vulnerable population in Serbia, and to assess their suitability and appropriateness for future sustainable use, with the aim of improving the housing conditions of Roma and also to regularise and improve Roma settlements. Furthermore, based on this research and consultation with Roma and relevant civil society organisations, local self-governments and relevant ministries, a number of improved housing models (at least three), considered to be most appropriate and best suited for the implementation in 20 municipalities participating in the project *We are here together*, will be developed.

The aim of this study is to present housing solutions, i.e. the models that were used in 20 pilot municipalities and in municipalities throughout Serbia and which can, with some improvements, be implemented in some future projects to improve the housing of Roma and other vulnerable groups, primarily refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs). This study presents a total of 18 different models that have been used. These models have been

developed, upgraded and improved gradually. It is to be expected that this process will continue in the future. The housing solutions/models presented in this study are divided into four basic groups: A) The first group includes the solutions according to which the families built their own houses without relying on any external help; B) the second group comprises the models of building social apartments in which the family is a beneficiary of rented residential unit, owned by a municipality, as well as the models according to which the ownership of apartment is transferred to the beneficiary; C) the third group includes the solutions according to which the families are given houses to be their private property, in case they already own some resources (land, old house, labour, etc.), which are used along with the support of the wider community, or in case they do not have any resources and receive full support in resolving their housing issues. According to these models, the families are owners of houses or residential units, or they remain or become land owners. The fourth group (D) includes five models focused on the improvement of housing conditions in the existing structures, through the provision of assistance in repair, reconstruction or extension and/or allocation of building material.

Each model is described through the following elements: Description of model, who were the beneficiaries of the model (target group), who were the main actors in the implementation of the model, where the model was used, what was the strategic and legal basis for the implementation of the model, problems related to building land, what was the quality of completed work, how the model influenced the cost of housing, what were the structure and materials, who did the work, how the house was used while the works were in progress, which was the price¹, what was the duration of construction. At the end, there are brief recommendations. Each model is illustrated with several photos showing typical solutions. The photographs were taken in different municipalities throughout Serbia, not only in 20 pilot municipalities covered by the project *We are here together*.

In drafting this study, we used the answers of Roma coordinators to the question of which models have been used in individual municipalities (survey and interview). We also collected crucial strategic documents related to Roma housing adopted by municipalities in the past period.

¹ This refers only to the cost of construction, and not to the total cost, which includes the value of land (site) and various costs related to the site infrastructure, etc.

Table 1: Overview of the answers of Roma coordinators to the question of which models or solutions for the improvement of housing for Roma have been used in their municipalities since 2009

	Koceljeva	Valjevo	Bujanovac	Vranje	B. Palanka	Prokuplje	Žitorađa	Leskovac	Bojnik	Knjaževac	Kruševac	Kragujevac	Smederevo	Kovin	Pančevo	Novi Sad	Odžaci	Sombor	Palitula	Zvezdara	
1. Turn-key system							■						■								■
2. Engagement of craftsmen	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■				■			■	■
3. Self-help construction of house	■	■		■	■	■	■	■	■			■			■		■			■	■
4. Extension and adaptation	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■		■		■			■	■
5. Self-help construction of shacks				■	■				■						■		■				■
6. Production of adobe bricks					■		■		■						■						
7. Non-profit purchase of apartment																					
8. Soc. housing with subs. rents															■						■
9. Social housing in supportive environment		■		■	■				■			■	■								■
10. Non-residential containers			■			■														■	■
11. New house									■	■	■	■	■			■	■	■			
12. New house on the site of the old one	■																				
13. Buying a village house				■			■			■		■					■	■			
14. Addition of resid. prem.		■	■			■	■		■	■		■					■			■	
15. Addition of sanit. fac.		■				■			■	■				■		■	■			■	■
16. Repairing house	■	■	■	■	■	■	■			■		■				■	■	■			
17. Completion of unfinished house				■	■	■				■	■						■				

The study is aimed to help the local self-governments in 20 pilot municipalities included in the project *We are here together – European support for Roma inclusion* to opt for the solutions for improving Roma housing, which are most appropriate for their local conditions. The municipalities included in the project are the following: Koceljeva and Valjevo (Western Serbia); Bujanovac, Vranje, Bela Palanka, Prokuplje, Žitorađa, Leskovac and Bojnik (Southern Serbia); Knjaževac (Eastern Srbija), Kruševac, Kragujevac and Smederevo (Central Serbia), Kovin, Pančevo, Novi Sad, Odžaci and Sombor (Northern Serbia), and Palilula and Zvezdara in Belgrade.

A. Group of models “Roma building their own houses”

1. Turn-key system

Description of model:

The main characteristic of this model is that some better-off Roma families hired one or more contractors, depending on the phase of construction works on the new house, and they built it from the foundation to the roof, i.e. from rough construction to finishing works. The state and local self-governments do not have any obligations towards this category of Roma families in terms of social housing or social welfare because they are not disadvantaged and solve their housing needs by themselves under market conditions. The houses of better-off Roma were usually built for one or two families. The family members were not engaged in construction, except in organisational and financial tasks. This models implies that the family had the required documentation based on which a building permit was obtained. This is a model used also by the general population, not only Roma.

Who were the beneficiaries of this model:

The better-off Roma families who were able to pay contractors and get a “turn-key” house in this way.

Who were the main actors in the implementation of this model:

Roma families, municipality and relevant municipal services, utility enterprises, contractors and skilled craftsmen.

Where was this model used:

In the group of 20 municipalities, the model of constructing new houses according to the “turn-key” system was recorded in two municipalities: Zvezdara and Smederevo. It has been estimated that about 50 houses in the Municipality of Zvezdara were built in this way. This estimate includes a small number of new houses bought by the families from a contractor who had constructed them (for example in Orlovsko settlement). According to the estimates, about 20 houses in Smedrevo were built according to this model, mainly in rural areas. It is very likely that the “turn-key” model was used in larger and richer areas, such as Niš, although the survey indicates that it was not used in Novi Sad or Kragujevac.

Photo 1 TURN-KEY



Only well-off Roma families can afford a "turn-key" home, but this is true also for the general population. This group of Roma families is not in need of state support and assistance in the provision of adequate housing. These examples are from Belgrade (photo A), Bujanovac (photo B), Požarevac (photo C) and Aleksinac (photo D).

What was the strategic and legal basis for the implementation of this model:

The Roma families that build their homes in this way are not the beneficiaries of the Strategy or Action Plans for the improvement of housing for Roma. The legal basis for the construction of this housing stock is the *Law on Planning and Construction*.² It is probable that some of these buildings will have to be legalised due to the failure to obtain a building permit in a timely fashion.

Land:

The houses were constructed on the building lots that belonged to the families. One of the conditions for obtaining a building permit, and solving the housing problem in that way, are settled property relations.

Source and way of financing:

The expenses were covered by the families. The source of funds were family savings, remittances from some family members living abroad, salaries earned abroad, possibly loans and borrowings from friends.

What was the quality of completed works:

Given that most construction and finishing works were performed by professional entrepreneurs and skilled craftsmen, the quality of these houses is mainly satisfactory.

Housing costs:

The costs of housing are increased if there is a loan to be repaid.

Structure and materials:

The structure and materials used in this model were the ones usually used for the construction of individual houses in Serbia. In some cases, expensive details and materials were used, in particular for decorations and adornment of houses.³

Who performed the works:

All works were performed by professional entrepreneurs with appropriate manpower.

² Official Gazette of RS, nos. 72/09, 81/09 – corrigendum, 64/10 – CC and 24/11.

³ Macura, V. (2009). *Roma settlements in Serbia – Current state of affairs and future goals*, part of EU-ROMA project/Action 3. Belgrade: Society for the Improvement of Local Roma Communities, http://issuu.com/euroma/docs/3-macura_serbia_final_300_eu_roma_150709_2335, 23. 03. 2014.

How was the house used while the works were in progress:

Not applicable.

What was the price of this model:

The cost of building a house according to the “turn-key” system depends of the needs and desires of the family, and on the municipality in which it is constructed. The price of material and labour, without any other costs, ranges from 300 to 550 €/m². Most often, this price was about 350 €/m².

Duration of works:

According to the previous practice, it can be estimated that it takes two to three construction seasons to build a complete house with all finishing works, both interior and exterior.

Recommendations:

- The municipality should provide Roma families with advice on the energy efficiency of houses and avoidance of unnecessary CO₂ emissions, which applies to all investors and constructors, and not just to Roma.

2. Building a house by engaging families and skilled craftsmen**Description of model:**

This model is based on the idea of combining own family labour, for the works that family members can perform, and the work of professional craftsmen who are paid for their work. This model implies that the family owned a building lot, and in some cases the family even possessed the required documentation based on which a building permit was obtained.

Who were the beneficiaries of this model:

The families that opted for this model were middle-income or low-income Roma families.

Who were the main actors in the implementation of this model:

Roma families, municipality and relevant municipal services, utility enterprises, skilled craftsmen for the works that the families could not perform by themselves.

Where was this model used:

The model of building new houses with the combined work of family and professional craftsmen was recorded in most of 20 municipalities. Based on a survey conducted among municipal coordinators for Roma issues, it can be said that this is a predominant model used by Roma for solving a housing situation of their families.

What was the strategic and legal basis for the implementation of this model:

The Roma families who build their homes in this way have not been targeted by the action plans for the improvement of housing for Roma. Certain measures included in the *Strategy for Improvement of the Status of Roma*⁴ have not been implemented. These measures are related to the support that local self-government units should provide to Roma to improve their housing situation (these include assistance in the extension and completion of unfinished houses, such as the provision of free legal assistance, advice and representation in the regulation of property issues and the exercise of the right to housing, in accordance with the regulations governing property relations and aspects of the planning and construction of residential buildings), but such measures have not been systematically undertaken.⁵ It is necessary to mention the issue of legalisation of buildings built in this way, because it is unlikely that all of the houses were built with a building permit. For this reason, a part of this housing stock will potentially be subject to legalisation.

Land:

The houses were constructed on the building lots that belonged to the families. It was also one of the conditions for obtaining a building permit.

Source and way of financing:

The expenses were covered by the families. The sources of funds were family savings, remittances from abroad, salaries earned abroad, and sometimes borrowings from friends.

What was the quality of completed works:

Given that most finishing works have been performed by professional craftsmen, the quality of these houses is mainly satisfactory. However, in more than one place we have noted flaws and construction errors that can lead to moisture penetration, cold rooms, etc. The family is

⁴ Official Gazette of RS, no. 27/09.

⁵ The cases where such assistance was provided are discussed in the sections C and D of this study.

often satisfied with the arranged interior, while the finishing of exterior is left for a "better time".

Photo 2 BUILDING A HOUSE BY ENGAGING FAMILIES AND SKILLED CRAFTSMEN



a



b



c



d

Building a house by engaging families and skilled craftsmen is the most popular housing model, because it is based on the distribution of tasks according to knowledge and financial capabilities. Photo A, taken in the settlement Vasa Nikolić in Aleksinac, shows a house whose construction has stopped until new funds are collected. Photo B shows a house in Surdulica whose roof is obviously not professionally built. Photos C and D are from the settlement Mala Guba in Prokuplje and both of them clearly show that some works were executed by families, and some by skilled craftsmen.

Housing costs:

The costs of housing are increased if there are borrowings that have to be repaid.

Structure and materials:

The structure and materials used in this model were the ones usually used for the construction of individual houses in Serbia. There are some cases of using second-hand or recycled materials.

Who performed the works:

The family members usually perform the roughest construction work, primarily concreting of various structural parts of the house (foundations, vertical and horizontal ring beams, slabs, stairs, etc.), but they do not deal with the formwork and reinforcement, which is done by professional craftsmen. Professional craftsmen also perform all jobs that require certain qualifications or years of practice (insulation works, installation of carpentry, bricklaying and plastering, all types of installations, etc.). On the other hand, hiring of professional and skilled craftsmen depends on the financial ability of the family. Hence, low-income families usually engage the so-called “semi-skilled” or self-taught craftsmen, because of their lower prices, which has a negative impact on the quality of works.

How was the house used while the works were in progress:

Not applicable.

What is the price of this model:

The price of a house built by the family, with the help of craftsmen, is lower than the price of a “turn-key” house by approximately 30–40%, which means that it cost about 150 to 250 €/m², which depended on the desired furnishing and the municipality in which it was constructed. Also, the total price of the house depended on the level of qualification and daily wages of craftsmen hired by the family. For example, the usual amount of daily wages charged by skilled craftsmen was about 50 euros in Belgrade, 30-35 euros in Bojnik, or 25-30 euros in Bujanovac. The amount of daily wages for assistant workers ranged from 10 to 15 euros.

Duration of works:

According to the previous practice, it can be estimated that it takes two to three construction seasons to build a habitable house, or even longer if the finishing exterior works are delayed (facades, gutters, sidewalks around the house, and so on).

Recommendations:

- The municipality should provide Roma families with advice on the energy efficiency of houses and reduction of CO₂ emissions, which applies to all investors and constructors, and not just to Roma.
- The municipality should provide Roma with professional supervision of works in order to avoid unnecessary errors and omissions that are the result of ignorance or carelessness of dishonest contractors.

3. Self-help construction of house

Description of model:

Self-help is a procedure in which the builder is a user of constructed facility. This model implies that a Roma family performs all the work on its house, from the planning phase through preparatory works, construction and installation, all the way to finishing works. There are five basic conditions for a family to start building its own house, thus solving the housing issue. These are: possession of knowledge about house building, having a physical force, possessing at least minimum financial and material resources, possessing the skills to build a house, and fulfilling certain legal conditions.

Who were the beneficiaries of this model:

Despite the obstacles of legal nature and the failure to fulfil other conditions (knowledge, skills, physical strength, and minimum financial resources), a significant number of low-income Roma families build their own houses.

Who were the main actors in the implementation of this model:

Roma families, groups of friends and relatives who can help with some works.

Where was this model used:

The model of self-help was noted in a number of municipalities from the group of 20 included in the project *We are here together*: Koceljeva, Vranje, Prokuplje, Žitorađa, Bojnik, Kragujevac, Odžaci, Leskovac and Zvezdara. In nearly half of these 20 municipalities, self-help was recorded as a way in which Roma used to solve their housing issue.

What was the strategic and legal basis for the implementation of this model:

The Roma families that build their homes by themselves have been mentioned in recommendations, strategies and action plans for the improvement of housing for Roma only in principle. Self-help is partly regulated by the law according to which the construction of residential and ancillary facilities for own needs and the needs of family household can be performed by a person that has appropriate qualifications and passed professional exam.⁶ In other words, under the current law, the majority of Roma families would not be allowed to build their own homes because they do not meet these requirements. In addition, a proper building permit is required, but a significant number of self-help builders who build their own houses do not have it. The houses from this group may be subject to legalisation.

Photo 3 SELF-HELP CONSTRUCTION OF HOUSE



Self-help is a demanding process that requires knowledge, physical strength, willingness, skills, financial resources and meeting of certain legal requirement. The families who build their own houses focus on different elements. The house shown in photo A is located in the settlement Dudare in Zrenjanin, where the family paid special attention to landscaping. Photo B shows that a family from Aleksinac began building a new house next to the old one. The houses in the settlement Tošin bunar in Belgrade are modest (photos C and D).

⁶ *Law on Planning and Construction*, Article 171, paragraph 7 (Official Gazette of RS, nos. 72/09, 81/09 – corrigendum, 64/10 – CC and 24/11).

Land:

The houses were constructed on the building lot that belonged to the families, or on which the families settled without being evicted by authorities. This means that these people build their houses on their own land, as in the village of Mala Guba in Prokuplje, but also on the land of other owners, as in the settlement Grdička kosa 2 in Kraljevo, where the houses were built on the land owned by the Serbian Railways.

Source and way of financing:

The families provide as much financial resources as they can at certain time for the purchase of materials that cannot be substituted by second-hand or other materials. In some cases, for example in Bojnik, the family members worked one hectare of arable land in exchange for approximately 1,500 pieces of second-hand roof tiles, which they used for their house.

What was the quality of completed works:

The quality of performed construction, finishing and installation works was lower in most cases. This is due to the lack of knowledge and skills, and the lower quality of materials, which are typical for self-help. The families often completed only the interior, while the external works have been delayed or have never been completed.

Housing costs:

The costs of housing should not increase, if there are no major borrowings to be paid.

Structure and materials:

The structure and materials used in this model were the ones usually used for construction, but their quality was lower. Self-help builders often use second-hand or recycled materials, if they are cheaper than new materials.

Who performed the works:

Over several months or more construction seasons, the families perform works by themselves to the extent they are able to. Some neighbours or friends are usually engaged to do the works for which the family members do not have necessary skills, and that favour is later returned through work.

How was the house used while the works were in progress:

The house is used while the works are in progress.

What is the price of this model:

It is very difficult to estimate the prices of self-help houses. In the region of Kanjiža, the market value of such houses (completely finished and land included) is about EUR 2,500-3,000 (these are the houses made of adobe bricks). This could be considered an average cost of building such a house. Taking into consideration that it takes several years of building, it seems necessary to provide the amount of one hundred euros per month for construction.

Duration of works:

According to the previous practice, it can be estimated that it takes several construction seasons to build a house. One self-help builder from Horgoš said that he and his wife had built their house for five years, but that it had not been completed yet.

Recommendations:

- Although self-help involves a number of obstacles and challenges, it is a common practice. Therefore, municipalities, civil society organisations, professional builders and others, should be engaged, in cooperation with the Ministry, in regulating this model to provide legal certainty for self-help builders. This is the central issue that is related to regulations and their adjustment to the capabilities of low-income Roma families.

4. Expansion and adaptation of existing houses**Description of model:**

The expansion and adaptation of the house by oneself is a standard and constant work on the improvement of housing conditions, performed by many Roma families. It involves the whole gamut of works, from the regular current maintenance through capital maintenance and interventions such as repair, addition, including upward addition, adaptation, etc. According to previous experience, families usually perform relatively small works such as repairing gutters, roofs, addition of small rooms, etc. There is no complicated adaptation, complex reconstruction, or combination of various works that would be expensive.

Who were the beneficiaries of this model:

Middle-income or low-income Roma families are the two groups that improve and renovate their houses according to this model.

Who were the main actors in the implementation of this model:

The main actors in this model are Roma families, occasional craftsmen, group of friends and relatives who can help with some works.

Where was this model used:

Out of 20 municipalities, works on expansion and adaptation of houses were performed in the following ones: Koceljeva, Bujanovac, Vranje, Prokuplje, Žitorađa, Bojnik, Knjaževac, Kuršumlja, Kragujevac, Smederevo, Odžaci and Zvezdara. This means that in more than half of the municipalities, Roma improved their housing conditions in this way.

What was the strategic and legal basis for the implementation of this model:

This type of works was mentioned in the *Strategy for Improvement of the Status of Roma*, as a recommendation to local self-governments to regulate self-help and thus help Roma to improve their housing conditions. All these works performed by Roma to improve their housing situation were regulated by law. However, most Roma did not possess proper permits required for these works. One of the serious reasons for the inability to obtain permits is found in the municipalities because very few of them have urban development plans based on which permits may be issued. Therefore, under the current law, the majority of Roma families would not be allowed to expand, repair, maintain, adapt, etc. their own homes because they do not possess the required documentation, which certainly is neither realistic nor in accordance with the life needs of these families.

Land:

Extension, addition, upward addition and other types of works were performed on the building lots where Roma houses already existed, regardless of their ownership status.

Source and way of financing:

The family financed all these works. Financial resources, as much as available, were used for the material that could not be replaced with some other material, or for the payment of craftsmen.

What was the quality of completed works:

The quality of performed construction, finishing and installation works is between average and poor.

Photo 4 EXPANSION AND ADAPTATION OF EXISTING HOUSES



Expansion and adaptation of houses is a process similar to self-help construction or combination of family and professional work. A large number of Roma families expand, adapt or make additions to their houses for years. Photos A and B show the examples of additions to houses in Prćilovci (Aleksinac) and upward additions in the settlement Stoćni trg (Niš). Photo C shows the interior of the unfinished addition to a house in the settlement Novosadska in Batajnica (Belgrade).

Housing costs:

The costs of housing should not increase, if there were no borrowings to be repaid.

Structure and materials:

The structure and materials used in this model were the ones usually used for construction, but their quality was often lower.

Who performed the works:

The family, together with some craftsmen, depending on the type of works, and possibly some friends or relatives to whom this favour would be returned later on.

How was the house used while the works were in progress:

The house is usually used while the works are in progress.

What is the price of this model:

According to some experiences, the cost of works performed in one working cycle does not exceed a few hundred euros, up to 200 or 500 euros for the overall working operation.

Duration of works:

Given that these are relatively small construction interventions, works last a relatively short period of time. Sometimes they are completed in one or two weekends.

Recommendations:

- Additions, upward additions, repairs, reconstructions, regular maintenance works, capital maintenance, etc., regardless of being done in specific self-help arrangements, should be socially supported. In this regard, municipalities, together with the relevant ministries, need to find ways to include these works in legal construction activities, but under conditions acceptable for low-income Roma families.
- Municipalities should help Roma in the selection of interventions, adequate materials, quality of work and the like.

5. Self-help construction of “shacks” (the worst housing stock)

Description of model:

The self-help construction of a structure popularly called “shack” is the worst form of housing solution implemented by Roma families.⁷ Shacks are constructed with low quality materials. Sometimes they are used as seasonal homes (in the case of seasonal workers), and sometimes as a more durable solution (if the family originates from the place where the shack was built). Municipalities usually tend to displace shack settlements, but they are rather disoriented in trying to solve this issue.

Who were the beneficiaries of this model:

The poorest Roma households with permanent residence in the territory of the municipality in which the shack was built, IDPs, refugees, returnees under readmission agreements⁸, families or single people who come to work seasonally (migrant workers) are the social groups that solve their housing issues by building shacks.

Who were the main actors in the implementation of this model:

The main actors are families and “craftsmen”.

Where was this model used:

Out of 20 municipalities, the building of shacks was recorded in Vranje, Bela Palanka, Bojnik and Zvezdara.

What was the strategic and legal basis for the implementation of this model:

Shacks and shack settlements have been mentioned in strategic documents only as a problem that needs to be solved, mainly by evicting their residents. Shacks have been built without any permits. Thus constructed homes cannot be legalised. Solutions to the housing problems of these families should be found in the construction of new buildings on the same lots, if it is in accordance with plans and if it is possible to regulate land property relations, or in moving to another location or to another residential building.

⁷ Vuksanović, Z., Macura, V. (2006). *Stanovanje i naselja Roma u Jugoistočnoj Evropi: prikaz stanja i napretka u Srbiji*. Warsaw: OSCE/ODIHR (I izdanje). II izdanje Beograd: IAUS i Društvo za unapređivanje romskih naselja, 2007.

⁸ *Strategy for Reintegration of Returnees under Readmission Agreements* (Official Gazette of RS, no. 15/09)

Land:

The shacks were erected on the municipal land or the land owned by large public companies that have not expressed an interest in their land for many years.

Source and way of financing:

The family covers the costs of construction on its own.

Photo 5 SELF-HELP CONSTRUCTION OF “SHACKS”



Roma use the term "shacks" for the worst housing, constructed of used and discarded materials and non-building materials. Photos A and B, taken in 2005, show two shacks in the settlement in Agostina Neta Street in New Belgrade, and photo C, taken in 2007, shows a detail from the settlement Gazela. This settlement does not exist anymore, and its residents have been displaced in non-residential containers installed in several locations in the wider area of the city.

What was the quality of completed works:

Shacks are usually the worst kind of shelter: cold in winter, hot in summer, with the penetration of moisture and rain, with a high risk of fire. Almost all shacks are very small, usually because of the material used and not because of available land.

Housing costs:

The construction of shacks does not have a significant impact on the family's housing costs.

Structure and materials:

The most commonly used structures were the skeletons made of light timber. The materials used for building shacks are old or used materials (windows, doors, sheet metal, metal beams, concrete blocks, lumber), recycled materials (crushed concrete, bricks) and non-structural materials (carpets for roofing, agricultural plastics, corrugated cardboard).

Who performed the works:

The family builds a shack on its own, or together with some "craftsman". In order to do that, the family first needs to collect the building material.

How was the house used while the works were in progress:

The house is not used until it has been completely constructed.

What is the price of this model:

The market value of a finished shack varies between 50 and 500 euros, depending on its quality, but mainly depending on the location and municipality. In the former settlement Gazela in Belgrade, even the worst shacks, which were practically only shelters for the summer, used to reach the price of 200-300 euros per shack.

Duration of works:

According to one of the shack builders from Belgrade, who claims to have built hundreds of them and that he inherited the business from his father, it takes about one month to collect the materials in the streets and dumps of Belgrade for a solid shack (timber walls, hard nylon or waterproof cloth cover). A shack is built in one or two days.

Recommendations:

- The municipality should think carefully about the reason for displacing a shack settlement, since the process is very difficult, expensive and entails a series of problems, without guarantees for good and sustainable results.
- The municipality should consider, depending on the condition and location of shack settlement, whether it may be more efficient, from the aspect of cost-effectiveness and from the aspect of human rights, to gradually improve and legalise the settlement.
- If the local self-government decides to relocate the families living in shacks, such relocation should be performed according to the methods and procedures that are consistent with national and ratified international human rights standards.⁹

6. Own production of adobe bricks

Description of model:

In our previous research, we have found out that there is still a tradition of producing adobe bricks in Vojvodina. These are unbaked earth blocks of standard brick dimensions 12 x 6.5 x 25 cm, which are made of clay with the addition of chopped straw. After pressing them manually into wooden moulds, adobe bricks dry in the sun for up to a month, after which they are ready for use.

Who applied this model:

This material was not produced and used only by the poorest families, but also by many others. One of the reasons is cost-effectiveness, and the other is the fact that these houses provide a healthy living environment. The families we interviewed were low- and middle-income Roma families, as well as middle-income and wealthy Hungarian families.

⁹ Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. (1997). *General Comment n°7: The right to adequate housing (Art.11.1): forced evictions, 05/20/1997*, retrieved from [http://www.unhcr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/\(Symbol\)/959f71e476284596802564c3005d8d50?Opendocument](http://www.unhcr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/(Symbol)/959f71e476284596802564c3005d8d50?Opendocument), 21. 03. 2014;

Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). (2003). *Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti within the OSCE Area*;

United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Right to Adequate Housing. (2007). *Basic principles and guidelines on development based evictions and displacement*, retrieved from: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Housing/toolkit/Pages/RighttoAdequateHousingToolkitIssues.aspx>, 21. 03. 2014.

Who were the main actors in the implementation of this model:

Families were the only actor in the production of adobe bricks.

Where was this model used:

Adobe brick houses have been built throughout Vojvodina, in Central Serbia and in Southern Serbia. This material, used in folk architecture, was suppressed over time by factory-made hollow clay blocks. We encountered an active tradition of production and construction of adobe bricks in the north of Vojvodina, Municipality of Kanjiža, in the Roma settlement on the outskirts of Horgoš. Out of 20 municipalities included in the project *We are here together*, production of this construction material was observed also in Bela Palanka, Žitorađa, Bojnik and Pančevo. There are individual initiatives to revive this construction technique¹⁰

What was the strategic and legal basis for the implementation of this model:

Some strategic documents and action plans discuss the innovative approaches to building houses based on sustainable solutions acceptable from the environmental aspect, and adobe bricks as building material are undoubtedly eco-friendly. However, this material has been forgotten over time and today there are no standards for its production.

Land from which earth is taken:

Earth for making adobe bricks was usually taken from some village or municipal rough grazing land.

Source and way of financing the production:

According to Roma, no compensation has been paid to the municipality for taking earth to make adobe bricks.

What was the quality of completed works:

It is likely that the quality of adobe bricks made today is the same as it was hundreds of years ago, or the same as it was built in the houses that are now 100 or 150 years old.

¹⁰ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4QICSEnXDYw>, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PsTeszn24m4>, 10 March 2014.

Housing costs:

Housing costs do not increase by constructing the house with this material.

Structure and materials:

The adobe brick houses made by Roma are ground-floor houses. They have solid walls with wooden door-lintels and window-lintels, and they rarely have a straight arch. Mud mortar is used for brick laying and plastering (external and internal). A disadvantage of adobe bricks is the lack of resistance to weather conditions and moisture. However, there are very precisely defined methods of construction and protection of walls from rain and snow to ensure that moisture does not penetrate the adobe bricks. Some 20,000 of adobe bricks are needed to build a house of about 50 m² with the exterior wall of 51 cm or 60 cm after plastering.

Photo 6 PRODUCTION OF ADOBE BRICKS



a



b



c



d

Some Roma families in northern Vojvodina build their own houses of adobe bricks, which they produce from local clay mixed with finely chopped straw. Photo A shows the drying of adobe bricks, and photo B shows a detail of house structure built with this material. Photos C and D show the exterior and interior wall finishing in the houses that are built with this material, but do not belong to Roma. Pay attention to photo D that shows the ceiling and wall finish of earth plaster.

Who performed the works:

The family makes adobe bricks on its own. The family later on builds its house on its own or with the help of craftsman.

How was the house used while the works were in progress:

Not applicable.

What is the price of this model:

Rough construction costs up to 500 euros. Later works depend on the needs, desires and possibilities of families.

Duration of works:

It took about one month and two persons to build a house of about 50 m², with the plastered external walls about 60 cm thick, which is about 800 pieces/day.

Recommendations:

- The line Ministry should be interested in this model, because it may be very sustainable in terms of labour, funds and environment.
- The municipalities in which there is a practice of making and using adobe bricks should help Roma families, both in terms of legal and engineering matters, since there are architects and engineers who are familiar with this method of construction.

B. Group of models “building social apartments”

7. Apartments for purchase under non-profit conditions

Description of model:

This model, as established by the *National Strategy of Social Housing*,¹¹ involves the acquisition of apartments intended for sale under non-profit terms to the households without proper housing and with adequate income, but without the possibility to afford an apartment under market conditions. The main method for obtaining housing according to this model should be new construction. The implementation of this model is recommended in larger local self-governments.

Who are the beneficiaries of this model:

The beneficiaries of this model can be the households that do not own an apartment, households with inadequate apartments (i.e. if it is not possible to solve their housing needs by improving the existing apartments), which have enough income to be able to pay the cost of purchasing an apartment, through favourable loans (since this model implies a transfer of ownership over the apartment at the time of purchase). *The National Strategy of Social Housing* provides general instructions for determining a minimum income of the households that are potential beneficiaries of this model; these instructions will be defined in more detail in by-laws that are being drafted.

Main actors in the implementation of this model:

As envisaged in the *National Strategy of Social Housing*, the main actors in the implementation of this housing model should be: the ministry responsible for housing issues, the Republic Housing Agency (RHA) and local self-governments or local housing agencies. RHA should formulate an annual or a medium-term programme for the acquisition of apartments for this type of housing support and submit it to the Government for approval, through the ministry. If the programme is approved by the Government, RHA should open a competition to which local housing agencies and non-profit housing organisations could apply. Housing agencies have been established in 17 towns in Serbia and their founders are local self-government units. In accordance with Article 6 of the Law on Social Housing, the

¹¹ Official Gazette of RS, no. 13/12.

ministry responsible for housing proposes to the Government a social housing programme, which is prepared and implemented by RHA, primarily through the development of financial models and later on through the monitoring of the implementation and management of social housing funds. RHA should also prepare a draft regulation on standards and criteria for the allocation of apartments and for determining the order of priority (ranking) of the beneficiaries of this housing model. Within the framework of this model, the local self-government units that will obtain a part of funds for the implementation of housing programmes should specify these criteria through local rulebooks, in line with local needs.

Where was this model used:

The model of building apartments for purchase under non-profit terms, as envisaged by the *National Strategy of Social Housing* (adopted in 2012), has not been implemented in Serbia to date. It has been planned to implement this model through the programme of construction of 1,700 social apartments in several towns in Serbia. Out of the total of 1,700 social apartments planned to be constructed, it has been envisaged to sell 1,200 apartments under non-profit conditions, while the remaining 500 apartments would be used for subsidised rental housing. Over the past period, some local self-governments, such as Belgrade (since 2003)¹² and Niš (2009-2011)¹³, were building apartments that were sold to the households unable to solve their housing issues, mainly to employees in the public sector, under favourable conditions. In addition, the residential programmes implemented by the Commissioner for Refugees include some models of purchase according to which the apartments are first leased for a certain time, and then it is possible to purchase them.

What is the strategic and legal basis for the implementation of this model:

This model has been envisaged under the *Law on Social Housing*¹⁴ and the *National Strategy of Social Housing*¹⁵ as one of the forms of solving the housing needs of households. The ministry responsible for housing affairs will draft appropriate by-laws to elaborate the provisions from the Law and the Strategy concerning the implementation of this housing model. In Niš, this model has been implemented on the basis of the 2009 *Law on Social Housing* and local regulations, and its implementation continued in 2014.

¹² *Socijalni stanovi se u Beogradu sukcesivno grade poslednjih deset godina*, retrieved from: <http://www.beograd.rs/cms/view.php?id=1560766>, 22. 03. 2014.

¹³ Gradska stambena agencija Niš, Konkurs za prodaju 97 stanova u ul. Majakovskog u Nišu, <http://www.gsanis.rs/index.php?limitstart=3>, 27. 03. 2014.

¹⁴ Official Gazette of RS, no. 72/09.

¹⁵ Official Gazette of RS, no. 13/12.

The legal basis for the implementation of the model is also Article 191 of the 2010 *Law on Refugees*, which provides that the purchase price of the property used for solving the housing needs of refugees in this way will be 50% of the real estate value.

Land:

The land for the implementation of this housing model should be the urban land planned for residential use.

Photo 7 NON-PROFIT SALE OF APARTMENTS



The apartments whose construction was funded by a public institution and that were sold under favourable terms to the vulnerable households that were able to pay a loan. These examples are from Čačak (photo A) and Belgrade (photos B, C, D).

Source and way of financing:

Financial resources for the acquisition or construction of apartments can be provided by combining the various sources, whereas any other contribution (land, technical documentation, etc.) should be economically evaluated and taken into account. In addition to public budget funds, the sources of funding may include loans granted by international financial institutions at the European level, specialised in social housing loans. For the

implementation of this planned housing programme, most of the funds for construction will be provided from the loans granted by the Council of Europe Development Bank - CEB,¹⁶ and a smaller part from the national budget. The local self-governments in which this programme is implemented should provide land for construction, urban and technical documentation, as well as necessary building permits.

What is the quality of building, apartments, equipment:

Ninety-seven (97) apartments built in Niš are located in multi-family, multi-storey buildings consisting of basement, ground floor, 5 upper floors and attic. The site has access roads and parking lots, and is located close to various facilities (shops, services, etc.). Most apartments had a surface area of 35 to 63 m². In accordance with the surface, these were from one-room to two-and-half rooms apartments. All apartments have been fully equipped with installations.

Housing costs:

Households pay off a loan for purchasing apartments. Households were entitled to receive subsidised loans through the *National Corporation for Housing Loan Insurance*. The beneficiaries also pay the usual cost of water, electricity, heating fuel, etc.

Structure and materials:

The residential buildings in Niš have a classic design; they were built with standard materials; they are equipped with an elevator and all installations (plumbing, sewer, electricity, heating, telephone, etc.).

Who performs works:

In Niš, the works were executed by a construction company that was contracted by the City Housing Agency through a tender procedure.

How was the apartment used while the works were in progress:

Not applicable for this model.

¹⁶ *Law on Ratification of the Framework Loan Agreement between the Council of Europe Development Bank and the Republic of Serbia* F/P 1720. (Official Gazette of RS, no. 8/11)

What is the price of this model:

The tender price for the construction of 97 apartments in Niš in 2010 was 380 €/m², and the selling price (determined in 2011) was 759 €/m² of usable living area.

Duration of works:

The construction of 97 apartments in Niš lasted about 18 months, and the process of selecting programme beneficiaries or buyers of apartments lasted about half a year.

Recommendations:

- This model is available to households with adequate income and therefore the municipalities need to define precisely the criteria for selection of beneficiaries, on the basis of regulation that will be adopted at the national level, taking into consideration that the households with lower income would not be able to repay the loan for apartment. It is desirable to link this type of housing with the location of social rental housing and other forms of housing in order to create socially mixed communities.

8. Social housing with subsidised rents**Description of model:**

Social housing, pursuant to the *Law on Social Housing*¹⁷, Article 2, is “housing of an adequate standard that is provided with state support, in accordance with the social housing strategy and strategy implementation programmes, for the households that cannot afford an apartment under market conditions for social, economic or other reasons”. To date, this model in Serbia has mainly involved the construction of social rental housing.

Who were the beneficiaries of this model:

Article 10 of the *Law on Social Housing* provides basic criteria for determining the order of priority for addressing the housing needs of persons who are without housing or persons who do not have adequate housing; these are: housing status, amount of income, health, disability, number of household members and financial status. Additional criteria for determining the

¹⁷ Official Gazette of RS, no. 72/2009.

eligibility for this type of housing refer to giving priority to vulnerable social groups, such as young people, children without parental care, single parents, families with many children, single-person households, persons over the age of 65, persons with disabilities, disabled veterans and survival beneficiaries, civilians disabled in war, refugees and internally displaced persons, Roma and members of other socially vulnerable groups.

The beneficiaries of the apartments constructed so far are former refugees (530 apartments were built as part of UN-HABITAT SIRP¹⁸) and other, local population without housing and socially vulnerable population. In the previous practice, the beneficiaries were low- and middle income households, able to pay rent and utilities. Most apartments for social rental housing were built in Belgrade, a total of 633 apartments by the end of 2013, and out of this number, 626 have been leased (seven apartments have been allocated to the beneficiaries of supportive housing as part of support services for independent living). Also, there are 91 Roma households among the tenants, most of them former residents of the container settlements established by the city.¹⁹

Where was this model used:

Out of 20 municipalities included in the project *We are here together*, this model has been implemented in Valjevo, Kragujevac and Pančevo. Of other local self-governments, this model has been implemented in Belgrade (Municipalities of Zemun and New Belgrade), Niš, Kraljevo, Stara Pazova and Čačak, while the construction has been planned in Kikinda, Zrenjanin, Užice, i.e. in the local self-governments that have established housing agencies. The model of social housing has been used in Požarevac in 2011 during the eviction of a Roma settlement, which had the status of informal collective centre. At the location provided by the town, which also financed the infrastructure, 21 prefabricated houses were built for IDP families, including 20 Roma and 1 non-Roma family. The Commissariat for Refugees and Migrations financed construction through IPA funds.

¹⁸ SIRP - Settlement and Integration of Refugees Programme in Serbia, implemented by UN-Habitat - United Nations Human Settlements Programme in seven towns in Serbia in the period 2005 - 2008. (Ramirez, L., Mojivić Đ., Galassi B., Čolić, R., and Vuksanović-Macura, Ž. (eds.). (2008). *SIRP Book – The Settlement and Integration of Refugees Programme in Serbia*, Belgrade: UN-Habitat Belgrade.

¹⁹ Official website of the City of Belgrade: *Beograd za Rome: Preseljenje stanovnika neformalnih naselja u Beogradu*. <http://www.beograd.rs>, 16. 03. 2014.

What was the strategic and legal basis for the implementation of this model:

Prior to 2009, in the implementation of this model, local self-governments (Belgrade, Niš, Kragujevac, Kraljevo, Valjevo and other) relied on the *Law on Housing*²⁰ and local decisions. By the adoption of the *Law on Social Housing*²¹, the legal basis for the implementation of this model was established. Also, the legal basis is found in the by-laws base on the *Law on Social Housing*, including the *Regulation on standards and norms for planning, designing, constructing social housing apartments and conditions for their use and maintenance*²². In addition to this, the legal basis is the *Law on Planning and Construction*²³ with corresponding by-laws. The main strategic basis is the *National Strategy of Social Housing*²⁴ and the *Action Plan* for its implementation.

Photo 8 SOCIAL HOUSING WITH SUBSIDISED RENTS



Local self-governments rent publicly-owned social housing apartments, under non-profit terms, to the households without housing and who cannot provide housing under market conditions. Housing agencies

²⁰ Official Gazette of RS, nos. 50/92, 76/92, 84/92, 33/93, 53/93, 67/93, 46/94, 47/94, 48/94, 44/95, 49/95, 16/97, 46/98, 26/01, 101/05

²¹ Official Gazette of RS, no. 72/09.

²² Official Gazette of RS, no. 26/13.

²³ Official Gazette of RS, nos. 72/09, 81/09 – corrigendum, 64/10 – CC and 24/11.

²⁴ Official Gazette of RS, no. 13/12.

manage the buildings constructed within the framework of UN-HABITAT SIRP in Valjevo (photos A and B), Kragujevac (photo C) and Čačak (photo D). Photo D shows the social apartments in row houses that are very suitable for Roma housing culture. These houses Požarevac were built by the German organisation ASB.

Land:

Land for construction of apartment buildings for social housing was provided by local self-governments, on the location they owned or were entitled to use.

Source and way of financing:

Funding for construction has been provided by foreign donors (e.g. the Republic of Italy financed SIRP, which was implemented by UN-Habitat in collaboration with the Ministry of Capital Investments, which was then responsible for housing affairs, as well as other countries and the European Union), and some smaller amounts of funds were provided from local budgets (Belgrade, Kragujevac). The municipalities participated in the provision of location and infrastructure, technical documentation, permits for building and use, connections to infrastructure installations and capital maintenance of buildings and apartments.

What is the quality of building, apartments, equipment:

The size of apartments was usually ranging from 25 to 50 m² and exceptionally up to 80 m². As regards their spatial structure, studios, one- and two-room apartments were usually built, and in exceptional cases they consisted of more rooms. Apartments were always equipped with standard plumbing, sewage, electricity and heating installations, sanitation fixtures and often even kitchen fixtures (sink, water heater). Apartments are sometimes overcrowded, that is - there is less than 10 m² per household member.²⁵

Housing costs:

The beneficiaries of social housing pay subsidised rents and all utility expenses (water, heating, garbage disposal, electricity, etc.). In Belgrade, all the households that paid their bills regularly had the possibility of 50% reduction on all utility bills and rent.²⁶ In other

²⁵ The criterion of 10 m² per household member as minimum apartment surface is prescribed in Article 18 of the *Regulation on standards and norms for planning, designing, constructing social housing apartments and conditions for their use and maintenance* (Official Gazette of RS, no. 23/13) and it is also recognised in the European Union indicators for measuring social inclusion in housing.

²⁶ On the basis of *Decision on determining the categories of beneficiaries that pay subsidised price of utility services* (Official Gazette of the City of Belgrade, no. 31713.)

towns, some vulnerable households had an option of paying partially subsidised utility bills, but without rent subsidies (in some cases there were construction subsidies). The amount of rent for the apartments built as part of UN-HABITAT SIRP ranged from 1.3 to 1.6 €/m² (because of different construction costs in each town), which means that the monthly rent was between 30 and 80 euros depending on the size of apartment. In Požarevac, the town owns apartments (prefabricated houses). The families did not pay rent, only utility expenses, while the town and the Social Welfare Centre paid or partially subsidised the utility services for the poorest families.

Structure and materials:

Apartment buildings for social housing are constructed with standard and quality building materials. These are multi-storey residential buildings, classically constructed with conventional building materials and skeletal or massive construction. The buildings have standard insulation. Innovative materials or alternative sources of energy have not been used in building social housing in Serbia.

Who performed the works:

The works were performed by a construction company, engaged through a tender procedure by the local self-government or the Housing Agency, if established.

How was the house used while the works were in progress:

Not applicable to this model.

What is the price of this model:

The construction cost of apartments built within the framework of UN-HABITAT SIRP was 400 - 450 €/m² of net living area, in the period 2006-2008, excluding the cost of acquiring and equipping the construction land²⁷. Within the framework of a housing programme to be financed from the Council of Europe Development Bank - CEB, the estimated value of apartment construction is approximately 400 €/m² without the cost of acquiring and equipping the land, as these costs will be considered building subsidies and will not be included in the rent for these apartments.

²⁷ Documentation of UN-HABITAT Office in Belgrade - SIRP.

Duration of works:

The average time required for completing a project of residential building construction ranged from two and half to three years. Within that period, about a year and a half to two years were spent on the preparation of site, technical documentation and obtaining a construction approval, and about a year to a year and a half was spent on the selection of contractors and construction. The process of selection of apartment users on average lasted about half a year, sometimes even longer.

Recommendations:

- In the future construction, the relation between the structure and surface of apartment and the size of household to which social housing will be allocated should be taken into account, in order to avoid overcrowding of these apartments.
- The scope of subsidies should be expanded to cover the payment of rent for vulnerable households.
- The Social Welfare Centres should regularly monitor the users of social housing and timely respond if there are problems of any kind, especially concerning the regular payment of rent and utility bills.
- In the future construction of social housing, the latest developments regarding the energy efficiency of buildings should be taken into consideration in order to reduce the cost of housing, especially the cost of heating.

9. Social housing in supportive environment**Description of model:**

Social housing in supportive environment is a part of social welfare services through which local self-governments provide vulnerable households with housing in the apartments intended for this type of social welfare, along with the appropriate forms of assistance for independent living, through the activities of "host" and special support of Social Welfare Centres. Apartments were allocated to individuals in social need and without housing, such as the beneficiaries of financial social assistance, single parents, people with disabilities, the elderly and so on. "Host" is selected among tenants and paid to provide assistance and support to other tenants who are incapable, for various reasons, to ensure compliance with house rules, to maintain the common areas and to take care of the building and assets. The

beneficiaries of social housing in supportive environment do not pay rent, while the payment of utilities is arranged differently in different municipalities.

Who were the beneficiaries of this model:

In current practice, the main beneficiaries were refugees and IDPs, who were accommodated in collective centres, as well as socially vulnerable population. Apartments were allocated to 80% of refugee and IDP households and 20% of local population. In some municipalities, the criteria were extended to cover IDPs who used to rent privately-owned apartments under market conditions. According to a study conducted in 2009 in 21 municipalities in Serbia, 1,090 people (refugees, IDPs and local population) were accommodated in social housing in supportive environment. Of this number, only 60 individuals (or 5.5%) were Roma IDPs.²⁸ In general, Roma are rarely identified as "local socially vulnerable population", such as in Šabac, where two Roma families (one of which is the host family) are placed in this type of apartments. In addition, out of seven apartments for local people in Smederevo, four were allocated to Roma families.²⁹

Main actors in the implementation of this model:

So far, the main actor at the national level was the Commissariat for Refugees and Migrations, in cooperation with the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, while at the local level different institutions in different municipalities (social welfare centres, housing agencies, etc.) were in charge. Construction was carried out with the technical assistance of local or international non-governmental organisations (Housing Centre, Danish Refugee Council, etc.). The Social Welfare Centres are responsible for property management and work with beneficiaries.

Where was this model used:

Out of 20 municipalities included in the project *We are here together*, this model has been implemented in Bela Palanka, Kragujevac, Pančevo, Vranje, Prokuplje, Leskovac, Bojnik, Kruševac, Smederevo, Novi Sad and Zvezdara. Out of all these municipalities, Roma were beneficiaries only in Kragujevac and Vranje (five families in each), Smederevo (four families) and Zvezdara (three families). The Municipality of Knjaževac has developed a

²⁸ Vujošević M., Žarković. B. (2009). *Socijalno stanovanje u zaštićenim uslovima: istraživanje o ostvarenim rezultatima projekta 2003–2009*. Beograd: Housing centar i Ministarstvo rada i socijalne politike Srbije.

²⁹ Dragojlović-Jeremić, V. (2013). *Socijalno stanovanje u zaštićenim uslovima: iskustvo grada Smedereva*. Prezentacija na konferenciji: „Stanovanje Roma u Srbiji: od strategije do realnosti“, Beograd, 13. 11. 2013.

special form of social housing in supportive environment where rural households, or rural households with gardens, were used for the provision of this service³⁰. In the Republic of Serbia, since 2003 this model has been recognised as a sustainable solution and 994 apartments have been constructed in 43 municipalities by the beginning of 2014, while the Roma families are the beneficiaries in 13 municipalities³¹.

Photo 9 SOCIAL HOUSING IN SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT



Social housing in supportive environment provides the most vulnerable households with comfortable apartments and support of host family and social services. Over the past ten years, about 1,000 apartments were built in 43 local self-governments. These are the examples of projects implemented by the organisation Housing Centre from Belgrade. Photo A shows two buildings in Valjevo, photo B shows the residents of a building in Niš, photo C shows open space in front of a building in Leskovac and photo D shows a building in Vranje.

³⁰ *Pravilnik o izboru korisnika i načinu i uslovima pružanja usluge socijalnog stanovanja u zaštićenim uslovima.* („Službeni glasnik Opštine Knjaževac“, br. 18/2012.)

³¹ Housing centra, *Socijalno stanovanje u zaštićenim uslovima* <http://www.housingcenter.org.rs/index.php/socijalno-stanovanje-u-zasticenim-uslovima>, 24. 03. 2014.

What was the strategic and legal basis for the implementation of this model:

This type of housing is applied in accordance with the provisions of the *Law on Social Welfare*³² and relevant decisions of local self-governments. This model also builds on the *National Strategy for Resolving the Problems of Refugees and IDPs*³³ and it was recognised in the *National Strategy of Social Housing*³⁴ as the most favourable solution for socially vulnerable households without housing and with the income below the relative poverty line, which does not allow them even to pay a subsidised rent. It should be taken into account that different municipalities and towns have different approaches to this matter based on their local possibilities.

Land:

Land for this model was provided by local self-governments, on the location they owned or were entitled to use.

Source and way of financing:

Funds for the construction of buildings and apartments were provided through international donor programmes and in recent years, mainly from IPA funds. Local self-governments provide the site and infrastructure, building permits and use permits, installation connections, capital maintenance of buildings and apartments, as well as the payment of host families.

What is the quality of building, apartments, equipment:

The size of apartment usually range from 20 to 50 m², and all apartments have a bathroom, a kitchen or kitchenette, a living room, one or two bedrooms, and sometimes a balcony. If there is a basement in the building then a basement room belongs to each apartment. The apartments have solid comfort and are equipped with installations for water, sewage and electricity, and sometimes heating (district or central). Ground floor units of buildings are tailored to the needs of people that are moving in a wheelchair. Overcrowding of apartments, that is - less than 10 m² space per household member, occurred in cases where the beneficiaries were multi-member households (with five or more members).

³² Official Gazette of RS, no. 24/2011.

³³ *National Strategy for Resolving Problems of Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons for the Period from 2011 to 2014*. Belgrade: Government of the Republic of Serbia

<http://www.kirs.gov.rs/articles/navigate.php?type1=14&date=0&lang=SER> (accessed on 16 January 2014).

³⁴ Official Gazette of RS, no. 13/12.

Housing costs:

As mentioned, the users of social housing in supportive environment do not pay rent, while local self-governments regulate differently the terms of payment of electricity bills and utilities. For example, the City of Niš used to provide free heating, and the beneficiaries could exercise the right to a discount on monthly bills for utilities (water, garbage collection, etc.). Kragujevac provided subsidies to households for electricity consumption up to 300 kWh per household (which was about 2,000 dinars per month) and for water consumption up to 3 m³ per household (about 200 dinars per month). In Smederevo, the town paid all or part (depending on the household income) of utility and electricity bills, and provided free heating to all households. The Municipality of Knjaževac paid all housing costs to the beneficiaries whose income was equal to or below the social welfare minimum.

Structure and materials:

Buildings for housing in supportive environment are multi-storey residential buildings, up to four floors. They were built with standard and quality building materials and with a skeletal or massive structure. The buildings have standard insulation. In the initial stages of the implementation of this model, all buildings were standardised, but later on, more attention was paid to the appearance and design of buildings, but still without the use of innovative materials or alternative energy sources.

Who performed the works:

The works was performed by a construction company, engaged through a tender procedure by the local self-government or partner organisation, usually NGOs.

How was the house used while the works were in progress:

Not applicable to this model.

What is the price of this model:

The construction price for the apartments built in four municipalities in 2007 ranged from 270 to 340 €/m² of gross building area³⁵, whereas the cost of construction of net living area in Smederevo and Vranje was € 440/m², and in Leskovac € 540/m². According to the records of Housing Centre, in the municipalities in which this organisation participated in the

³⁵ Mojović, Đ. (2010). Evaluation of 2007 IPA Project implemented by UNHCR in cooperation with the Housing Centre, <http://pur.rs/dokumenta.php>, 20. 03. 2014.

implementation of this model in the period 2008-2014, the average price of net living area was 480 €/m² (this price includes stairways, hallways, basements, access plateau, paths, benches, etc.).

Recommendations:

- In the future construction, the relation between the structure and surface of apartment and the size of beneficiary household should be taken into account, in order to avoid overcrowding.
- Access should be provided to more individuals from the local vulnerable population group through the construction of larger number of apartments.
- The scope of this right should be expanded to provide access to this type of housing services for Roma and IDPs living in informal settlements and returnees under readmission agreements.
- Consideration should be given to the possibility of transferring the maintenance of housing stock from social welfare centres to housing agencies or other local self-government services dealing with housing issues.

10. Accommodation in non-residential containers

Description of model:

Containers, as well as other types of structures (prefabricated, made of panel or foam, conventional or skeletal, etc.) *per se* are neither suitable nor unsuitable for housing. So far, non-residential containers have been used for housing in Serbia, although they are not designed for family living, but for other purposes. The containers were owned by municipalities / towns that allocated them to Roma families under certain conditions and for a determined period of time.

Who were the beneficiaries of this model:

This model has been used primarily for housing, temporary, durable or permanent, of extremely poor Roma families.

Who were the main actors:

The main actors were municipal/town authorities responsible for social welfare and individual Roma families.

Where was this model used:

This model has been used in Belgrade since the mid-1980s when Roma families were displaced from the city centre to the suburban settlement Ledine, and later in Kruševac and some other municipalities where it was used for accommodation of the poorest families, and in Kraljevo for accommodation of IDP families. In the group of 20 municipalities, containers have been used only in three municipalities: Prokuplje, Bujanovac and Zvezdara. In Prokuplje, two families were accommodated in non-residential containers, while in Bujanovac containers were placed in 2001 and used for accommodation of IDPs in the informal collective centre Salvatore, which has been relocated in the meantime. In the Municipality of Zvezdara, some 30 families were relocated from the settlement Gazela to Orlovsko settlement as part of the city programme for the eviction of residents from this slum in the period 2009 - 2010.

What was the strategic and legal basis for the implementation of this model:

The 2009 Action Plan for relocating the unsanitary settlement located under the Gazela bridge in Belgrade was the strategic basis for using this type of containers. The Action Plan refers to containers as “mobile housing units”, which were planned to be temporary accommodation³⁶. The *Law on Planning and Construction* mentions containers as facilities of provisional character for work execution purposes, used during the execution of works (offices, accommodation of workers, warehouses, canteen, etc.)³⁷, but it does not refer to them as residential space. Containers are neither included in the list of temporary urban structures installed in the areas of public use (kiosks, bus stops, etc.)³⁸. Some container manufacturers mention, in their presentations, the possibility of using containers for temporary housing and the possibility of their installation without building permits, but they do not specify the legal basis. In this sense, it is unclear what was the legal basis for their installation in the municipalities that have opted for this model.

³⁶ Official website of the City of Belgrade: *Beograd za Rome: Preseljenje stanovnika neformalnih naselja u Beogradu*. <http://www.beograd.rs>, 16. 03. 2014.

³⁷ *Law on Planning and Construction*, Article 2, paragraph 28 (Official Gazette of RS, nos. 72/09, 81/09 – corrigendum, 64/10 – CC and 24/11)

³⁸ *Law on Planning and Construction*, Article 146 (Official Gazette of RS, nos. 72/09, 81/09 – corrigendum, 64/10 – CC and 24/11)

Land:

The land on which the containers were placed was mainly owned by the municipalities, which also provided the necessary equipment.

Source and way of financing:

A donor organisation funded the purchase of containers and their installation.

Photo 10 NON-RESIDENTIAL CONTAINERS



a



b



c



d

Accommodation in non-residential containers was used as temporary solution for refugees and IDPs or in cases of eviction. Photos A and B are from Belgrade, photo C is from Opovo (it shows a concrete container), and photo D is from Kraljevo. Municipalities should avoid this type of absolutely inhumane accommodation because a temporary solution can easily turn into more durable or permanent housing in bad living conditions.

What was the quality of used containers:

The used containers were not designed for family housing and hence were inadequate in terms of size and functionality. They neither had proper structure of sufficient living space.

The ones used in Belgrade had dimensions 6.0 x 2.4 m, or 14.4 m² of surface and even five-member families were placed in them.³⁹ Although the families with many members received two containers, the living space was very small. These containers did not include a toilet or bathroom, but the shared toilets and bathrooms were installed in the “settlement” that consisted of 20 or 30 containers.

Housing costs:

The families who were placed in containers in Belgrade did not pay rent or utilities. The families who were given containers in Prokuplje did not use them for housing later on.

Structure and materials:

Containers are manufactured products and their quality is standardised. They are made of stainless steel frame, waterproof floors, good-quality insulation, doors and windows of modern plastic or similar material, durable exterior and interior paints, good-quality installations and other equipment of good quality. By connecting more containers (of basic dimensions 6.0 x 2.4 x 2.5 m), it is possible to make bigger facilities.

Who performed the works:

There are many container manufacturers in the domestic market. Containers made in the domestic market were used also in Belgrade. The preparation of land for setting up containers was performed by the local self-government.

How were the containers used while the works were in progress:

The containers were not used until they were installed on the ground and connected to the public electricity network.

What is the price of this model:

A new container of basic dimensions 6.0 x 2.4 x 2.5 m with ordinary equipment costs between 2,300 and 3,200 euros, and a used one costs between 1700 and 2500 euros. A new double container, measuring 6.0 x 4.8 x 2.5 m, costs between 5,000 and 7,500 euros.

³⁹ Praxis (2013) Doprinos socijalnoj inkluziji i borbi protiv diskriminacije marginalizovane populacije u Srbiji, Beograd, <http://www.praxis.org.rs/index.php/sr/>, 20. 03. 2014.

Duration of works:

On average, it takes between 15 and 45 days from the time of acquisition to the time of delivery. Preliminary works could last up to a month, while setting up a container is done in a day.

Recommendations:

- Municipalities should absolutely avoid buying or receiving as a gift non-residential containers that will be used for family housing, because non-residential containers are not designed for family living.
- If they opt for this form of solving housing problems, municipalities should buy or receive as a gift only containers that are designed and manufactured for housing, according to the national standards for social housing.
- If municipalities opt for this form of solving housing problems, they should issue a special act on the installation and removal of residential containers as "small prefabricated facilities of temporary nature."
- In using containers as a temporary housing solution, municipalities must ensure that they do not become a permanent solution for the people placed in them, as has happened many times before, both in Serbia and in other countries.

C. Group of models “getting a house with external assistance”

11. Getting a new house in ownership

Description of model:

The most important characteristic of this model is that a donor, a municipality or both institutions together, gave Roma families, and other vulnerable groups in exceptional situations, new houses in their ownership, because their old houses had been destroyed due to various causes (flood, earthquake, fire, landslide, etc.).

Who were the beneficiaries of this model:

The target group are the poorest Roma families, refugees and IDPs who remained roofless.

Who were the main actors in the implementation of this model:

Municipalities, Commissariat for Refugees, Roma, OSCE Mission to Serbia, the European Agency for Reconstruction (EAR) and other donors.

Where was this model used:

The model of building new houses was used in 2007, in the framework of Roma Support Programme, implemented by the OSCE Mission to Serbia. Ten (10) houses and building lots were provided to the poorest Roma families in Pirot at that time⁴⁰. As part of this programme, a house was built in the village Drenovac (Šabac) for a family that had remained roofless as a result of fire. That same year, the then Ministry of Infrastructure provided seven new houses in Zemun for the poorest families who were affected by flood. The Commissariat for Refugees used this model by allocating prefabricated houses to the families who had only land, without housing. In 2009, one family in Bojnik was given a new house on its land. The family consisted of a single mother with children, who after the eviction from the informal settlement Gazela in Belgrade was sent back to this municipality; the funds for the construction of house were provided from the state budget through the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy. In Smederevo three Roma IDP families were provided with housing in prefabricated houses, as part of the housing programme implemented by the Commissariat for Refugees and Migrations.

⁴⁰ Taut, L. (2007). *Sprovođenje Akcionih planova za Rome na lokalnom nivou*, Beograd: Misija OEBS u Srbiji, Odeljenje za demokratizaciju – Program podrške Romima

What was the strategic and legal basis for the implementation of this model:

In the mid-2000's the basis for this model was a *Unified Action Plan for Improving the Situation of Roma*, adopted by the Government of Serbia in 2005. Since 2009, the basis has been found in the *Strategy for Improvement of the Status of Roma*⁴¹ and the *Action Plan for the implementation of strategy in the field of housing*⁴². As regards housing solutions for refugees and IDPs, the legal and strategic basis was provided in the amendments to the *Law on Refugees*⁴³, and then in the *National Strategy for Resolving Problems of Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons*⁴⁴. At the local level, these are the local strategies and action plans that address the issues of housing for Roma, refugees and IDPs. Required building permits were obtained for the construction of new houses, in accordance with the *Law on Planning and Construction* applicable at that time⁴⁵.

Land:

The construction or installation of prefabricated houses was carried out on building lots that were owned by the families. The Commissariat for Refugees and Migrations required that the building lot on which a prefabricated house was supposed to be built should be located in an area planned for individual construction according to urban plans. In rare cases, a house was constructed on the lot where used to be a house (Drenovac). When the land on which the house was built was publicly-owned, a problem was encountered with the transfer of ownership from the municipality (state) to the beneficiaries.

Source and way of financing:

The funds for construction were provided through donors, as well as from the state and local budgets. Since 2011, the Commissariat for Refugees and Migrations has been financing the purchase of prefabricated houses for refugees and IDPs, mainly through the *Regional Housing Programme*.⁴⁶

⁴¹ Official Gazette of RS, no. 27/2009.

⁴² *Akcioni plan za sprovođenje strategije za unapređivanje položaja Roma 2013–2014*, retrieved from <http://www.ljudskaprava.gov.rs/>, 15. 11. 2013.

⁴³ Official Gazette of RS, no. 30/10.

⁴⁴ *National Strategy for Resolving Problems of Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons for the Period from 2011 to 2014*, retrieved from <http://www.kirs.gov.rs/articles/navigate.php?type1=14&lang=SER&date=0>, 18. 11. 2013.

⁴⁵ Official Gazette of RS, nos. 72/09, 81/09 – corrigendum, 64/10 – CC and 24/11.

⁴⁶ *Regional Housing Programme*, <http://www.regionalhousingprogramme.org/>, 22. 03. 2014.

What was the quality of completed works:

Since the houses are mostly prefabricated or professionally built, their quality is satisfactory. A family in Bojnik was given a house measuring approximately 50 m², with completed construction works, installed doors and windows, built-in basic installation, but without external finishes.

Photo 11 GETTING A NEW HOUSE IN OWNERSHIP



a



b



c



d

These photos show the examples of building houses (conventional, made of recycled materials or prefabricated) for the families that were vulnerable in different ways. Photo A was taken in Zemun where the Serbian Ministry of Capital Investments built six houses for the families whose houses were destroyed in a flood. Photo B shows a new house made of recycled bricks in Drenovac (Šabac) as part of the small grants programme of the OSCE Mission to Serbia. Photo C shows prefabricated houses in Smederevo and photo D shows one prefabricated house in Požega.

Housing costs:

Housing costs are increased by getting a new house as a gift, because these houses are properly built and connected to the utility infrastructure, which are the services that families must pay on a monthly basis.

Structure and materials:

The structure and materials for prefabricated houses are standardised sandwich panels, while the common building materials used in conventional massive construction were mainly hollow clay blocks with appropriate facade insulation.

Who performed the works:

The works were executed by registered companies, contracted through a tender procedure, except in Drenica where a group of volunteers was engaged.

How was the house used while the works were in progress:

Not applicable for this model.

What is the price of this model:

The construction of 10 houses in Pirot in the framework of the project, which was implemented by the OSCE Mission to Serbia, cost a total of 25,000 euros or 2,500 euros per house, while in Drenovac the costs exceeded 6,000 euros. The Commissariat was paying 15,000 euros on average for the purchase of a prefabricated house for refugees and IDPs, while the house surface area ranged from 35-50 m². According to the information given by the manufacturers of prefabricated houses in Serbia, their price, depending on the material used and equipment installed, ranged between 150 and 260 €/m² for rough construction (excluding foundations) and 340-410 €/m² for a “turn-key” house, including foundations. Thus, the price of prefabricated houses measuring from 30 to 60 m² was between 8,000 and 12,500 euros for rough construction (without foundations) or between 12,000 and 24,500 euros for a “turn-key” house. In the recent programmes of prefabricated houses allocation, implemented by the Commissariat, the family must pay the cost of connection to the infrastructure, which is up to 2,000 euros and for many of them it is a huge problem.

Recommendations:

- The municipalities should assess the needs for implementing the model of prefabricated houses, as there are households that own a building lot, but cannot cover the costs of construction by themselves.
- It is necessary to solve the problem of paying for the connection to the utility infrastructure because the families find it difficult to cover this cost.

12. Building a new house on the site of the old one

Description of model:

The most important characteristic of this model is that some municipalities or donors, or both, helped Roma to replace their old houses, which were ruined and dilapidated, with new ones. These new houses remained the ownership of Roma families.

Who were the beneficiaries of this model:

The poorest Roma families who are at risk of remaining roofless because their houses are dilapidated.

Who were the main actors in the implementation of this model:

Municipalities, donors, civil society organisations, building contractors, craftsmen and partly Roma if they were able to help.

Where was this model used:

In the group of 20 municipalities that participated in the project *We are here together*, only Koceljeva reported that they had used this model to solve the housing issue of two vulnerable Roma families. As regards the municipalities that did not belong to this group of 20, this model was used in the Municipality of Apatin.⁴⁷ In addition, nine old houses were replaced by new ones within the framework of a project implemented by the organisation EHO-RRC in Vojvodina.

What was the strategic and legal basis for the implementation of this model:

Strategic and action documents on social housing do not envisage this kind of solution to housing problems. The construction of new houses is performed in accordance with the *Law on Planning and Construction*⁴⁸. Although this was a donation and municipalities was involved, in some cases a required building permit was not obtained. Some of these houses may be subject to legalisation.

⁴⁷ Macura, Vladimir (2009) *Roma settlements in Serbia – Current state of affairs and future goals*, part of EU-ROMA project/Action 3. Belgrade: Society for the Improvement of Local Roma Communities, http://issuu.com/euroma/docs/3-macura_serbia_final_300_eu_roma_150709_2335, retrieved on 23. 03. 2014.

⁴⁸ Official Gazette of RS, nos. 72/09, 81/09 – corrigendum, 64/10 – CC and 24/11.

Land:

A new house is usually built on the same location or on the same lot where the old one was.

Source and way of financing:

The replacement of the old house with a new one was financed by the municipality or donor.

What was the quality of completed works:

Since the houses were professionally built, their quality is satisfactory. The size of houses built as part of the EHO-RRC project ranged from 20 to 30 m² and they consisted of one room, an anteroom and a bathroom⁴⁹.

Housing costs:

Housing costs do not increase by getting a new home as a gift, unless the family is required to pay the utilities that previously did not pay because the old house was not connected to the utility infrastructure.

Structure and materials:

The structure and materials used for conventional construction were common building materials, i.e. concrete foundations, posts and ring girders, fillings of hollow clay blocks or YTONG Apatin blocks.

Who performed the works:

The works were executed by craftsmen or registered enterprises selected through a tender process, or by Roma together with craftsmen.

How was the house used while the works were in progress:

Not applicable.

What is the price of this model:

⁴⁹ Jovanović, S. (2014). *Održiva obnova romskih naselja samogradnjom, prezentacija na Drugoj regionalnoj konferenciji o stanovanju*, OSCE/ODIHR, Tirana, 26–27. 02. 2014.

In some municipalities, the price of a house may range from 6,000 to 9,000 euros or from 120 to 180 €/m². The amount of funds donated in the EHO-RRC project was 3,600 euros for a house, which included only the cost of building materials.

Photo 12 BUILDING A NEW HOUSE ON THE SITE OF THE OLD ONE



Photos show an example of building a new house on the site of the old in case of Jovan Đurđević, 28 Omladinska Street in Apatin. In 2007, the municipality helped a number of most vulnerable families from a Roma settlement by providing them with building material packages and in some cases even with labour. Photos A and B show the condition of Đurđević's house before the intervention, photo C shows new foundations around the old house and photo D shows a house built with Ytong blocks, which was a model for Đurđević's house.

Duration of works:

It took one construction season to build a house.

Recommendations:

- The municipalities should assess the needs for the replacement of old houses with new ones, because the field experience has shown that there is a large number of households living in the houses that cannot be repaired, only replaced.

13. Buying a village house**Description of model:**

This model implies the purchase of rural houses with a garden plot from natural persons for the families at housing risk, who become new property owners. The purchase was done by the Commissariat for Refugees and donor organisations. The term “village/rural house” referred also to suburban houses, popularly called “weekend houses” with a garden plot suitable for minor agricultural activities. The activities of finding and selecting desirable locations (municipalities) and houses were carried out by interested households, and the purchase was done after establishing the legal status and physical condition of the building and lot. Apart from the provision of housing, this solution allowed the families to engage in minor agricultural activities to improve their financial situation.

Who were the beneficiaries of this model:

The beneficiaries of this model have been households, refugees and displaced persons, mostly those accommodated in collective centres. An important precondition was that the household members were willing and ready to live in rural conditions. The family immediately acquired ownership of the house and land with the obligation not to sell them in the period of five to ten years after moving in, and this limit depended on the conditions set in the project according to which this model was implemented.

Main actors in the implementation of this model:

So far, the main actor at the national level was the Commissariat for Refugees and Migrations. The international and local civil society organisations (Intersos, Vizija, Danish Refugee Council, etc.) provided households with support in assessing the quality and value of houses, assisted them with reconstruction, etc. Local self-governments were sometimes included in the programmes of integration or granted discounts on bills.

Where was this model used:

In the Republic of Serbia, in the period 2005-2010, 1,150 families, mainly refugees and IDPs, solved their housing problem in this way; rural houses were purchased in a total of 95 municipalities in Serbia. Out of 20 municipalities included in the project *We are here together*, this model has been implemented in Leskovac, Kragujevac, Kovin, Kruševac, Knjaževac, Sombor, Odžaci, Pančevo, Valjevo and Vranje⁵⁰. Roma were rarely included in this housing model. A certain number of Roma families from Bujanovac (IDPs who were accommodated in the collective centre *Tehnička škola* and the informal centre *Salvatore*) opted for this type of accommodation and moved into houses that were purchased through the Commissariat for Refugees and Migration in several villages in Vojvodina. In addition, the Municipality of Kula is among the rare ones that decided to solve some problems of Roma families by purchasing rural houses for their accommodation. They used the funds from the local and provincial budget in the period 2005-2011 to buy 10 houses with garden plots on various locations in the village Sivac for the relocation of the residents of an unsanitary Roma settlement in that village.

What was the strategic and legal basis for the implementation of this model:

This model relied also on the *National Strategy for Resolving the Problems of Refugees and IDPs*⁵¹ and relevant local action plans related to refugees, IDPs and Roma.

Land:

The land and house were usually private property. One of conditions for purchasing the property was the lot size, which had to be sufficient and adequate for small agricultural activities. Before the purchase, the lot and the house had to be legally regulated, that is - properly registered.

Source and way of financing:

Funds for the purchase of rural houses were provided through international or national donor programmes (Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency - SIDA, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation - SDC, UNHCR, the Foundation Ana and Vlade

⁵⁰ UNHCR, Intersoso, Vizija. (2011). *Village Houses: A successful strategy to respond to housing needs for refugees and IDPs in Serbia, Final Evaluation Report*, <http://www.unhcr.rs/en/resources/relevant-documents/vh-final-evaluation-report.html>, 14. 3. 2014.

⁵¹ *National Strategy for Resolving Problems of Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons for the Period from 2011 to 2014*. Belgrade: Government of the Republic of Serbia <http://www.kirs.gov.rs/articles/navigate.php?type1=14&date=0&lang=SER> (accessed on 16 January 2014).

Divac and other) and to a lesser extent from the national budget as support to the local self-governments in the implementation of action plans for refugees and IDPs. Since 2011 the purchase of rural houses for refugees and IDPs has been performed mostly through the Regional Housing Programme.⁵²

What is the quality of building, house, apartments, equipment:

The quality of the purchased facility had to be such as not to require major and expensive construction interventions, and to allow the use of the facility at least for five years without major investments into capital maintenance or other repairs. Therefore, it was important to carry out detailed technical inspections of the facilities and to establish their quality before purchase. The size of houses varied a lot, and it depended on the price and on the location (municipality) in which they were purchased.

Photo 13 BUYING A VILLAGE HOUSE



a



b



c



d

Buying a village house with a garden plot and making it property of a vulnerable family is a sustainable housing model, which in addition to its basic purpose has many other positive effects - economic empowerment of families, revival of villages, small scale agriculture and so on. The examples presented here come from the Foundation of Ana and Vlade Divac. The photos show the diversity of this kind offer and testify the possibility of finding an appropriate home.

⁵² *Regional Housing Programme*, <http://www.regionalhousingprogramme.org/>, 22. 03. 2014.

Housing costs:

The beneficiaries were paying the usual housing costs - water, electricity, heating fuel and others. The households were additionally burdened, immediately after purchasing the property, with the payment of the tax on transfer of absolute rights, in cases where the donor programme or local self-governments did not provide additional funds.

House structure and materials:

The purchased houses had different structures and were built of different materials. However, they were mostly classically built ground houses, which were ruined to some extent due to disuse and neglect.

Who performed the works:

The works on repairing and possible reconstruction of the house were usually performed by the family members or they engaged skilled craftsmen.

How was the house used while the works were in progress:

The family usually moves in and then renovates the house.

What is the price of this model:

Earlier, donors used to give between 6,000 and 7,000 euros for a house with a garden plot. The family could add up to 50% of the property value, 3,000 to 3,500 euros, so that the houses were bought for a total value of 9,000 - 10,500 euros. More recently, since 2012, donors have provided up to 8,000 euros, and if the family adds 50% of that amount - 4,000 euros, the total value of real estate is up to 12,000 euros. Also, the donor or the Commissioner provides construction and finishing materials in the amount of 800 to 1,100 euros per family, for the repair and reconstruction of purchased facility. The total cost does not include the amount of real estate sales tax, which depends on the price of the house, and has to be paid by the new owner.

Recommendations:

- It is necessary to allocate funds in the national budget for the implementation of local action plans for Roma housing, as it is done for the implementation of local plans for refugees and IDPs.

- Since ownership has proved to be an important incentive for households to opt for this housing model, it could be promoted among those who do not have their own housing unit and whose family members are willing to engage in agricultural activities.

D. Group of models “improvement of housing conditions”

14. Addition of residential premises with external assistance

Description of model:

Roma families are in need of adding some rooms or smaller residential units to respond to the growing family demands (new family member, marriage, children, illness, etc.). However, these are usually the additions of unspecified function, or additions of kitchen, living room or bedroom. External assistance is one of the ways to solve these needs. According to the law, *addition* refers to the execution of construction and other works for the purpose of creating *new space beyond the existing dimensions of a facility and topping it up*, making with it a new structural, functional or technical entirety⁵³.

Who were the beneficiaries of this model:

Low-income Roma families who live in overcrowded housing conditions and who are owners of houses. The beneficiaries were also residents of overcrowded and badly maintained apartments owned by the municipality or social welfare centre, although it was possible to add a room in such houses.

Who were the main actors:

Roma families, civil society organisations, international donors, municipalities, housing agency, international organisations.

Where was this model used:

In the framework of UN-HABITAT programmes, 10 rooms were added to the houses in the Roma settlement Grdička kosa 2 in Kraljevo. Upward additions, as a form of creating new housing units, were constructed within the framework of the same programme in Čačak, where 16 apartments in ground floor buildings in a row were reconstructed and four apartments were added on the first floor.⁵⁴ As regards the municipalities included in the project *We are here together*, additions of residential premises were constructed in four of

⁵³ *Law on Planning and Construction*, Article 135 (Official Gazette of RS, nos. 72/09, 81/09 – corrigendum, 64/10 – CC and 24/11).

⁵⁴ Vuksanović-Macura, Z., Mojović, Đ. (2008). *Alternativni stambeni projekti*. UL. Ramirez i dr. (ur.) *SIRP Book – The Settlement and Integration of Refugees Programme in Serbia*, Belgrade, pp. 61–75). Belgrade: UN-HABITAT Belgrade.

them: Bojnik (10 houses), Bujanovac (two houses), Prokuplje (four to five houses, mainly for IDPs) and Knjaževac (10 houses).

What was the strategic and legal basis for the implementation of this model:

The strategic basis for additions, including upward additions, in a wider sense was the *Strategy for Improvement of the Status of Roma*⁵⁵ and the *Action Plan for the implementation of strategy in the field of housing*⁵⁶. The legal basis was the *Law on Planning and Construction*⁵⁷, which specifies the requirement for a building permit and previously obtained location permits both in the case of extension and upward addition. In case of major interventions, such as those in Čačak, building permits were obtained. In some cases, additions of new residential premises - when they are smaller and performed on individual houses in Roma settlements - were carried out without a building permit, although it was done with the knowledge of municipality and its bodies and with the financial support of foreign donors. These facilities are potential cases of legalisation.

Land:

The issue of new land was usually not relevant because these were additions on the existing houses located on the existing lots. This issue became relevant when lots were small and rather crowded⁵⁸. Also, in principle, there was a property issue in cases where additions were constructed on the publicly-owned land (i.e. owned by the state, state enterprise, municipality, etc.).

Source and way of financing:

Donors or other organisations, through the municipality or civil society organisation, financed the development of technical documentation including the priced bill of quantities, i.e. an itemised price list of materials and works. In some cases, families contributed with their work and sometimes through the purchase of some building materials.

⁵⁵ Official Gazette of RS, no. 27/09.

⁵⁶ Akcioni plan za sprovođenje strategije za unapređivanje položaja Roma 2013–2014, retrieved from <http://www.ljudskaprava.gov.rs/>, 15. 03. 2013.

⁵⁷ Article 135 (Official Gazette of RS, nos. 72/09, 81/09 – corrigendum, 64/10 – CC and 24/11).

⁵⁸ Vuksanović-Macura, Z. (2012). The mapping and enumeration of informal Roma settlement in Serbia, *Environment and Urbanization*, Volume 24, Number 2, 685–705.

What was the quality of completed works:

The quality of completed works was good. The surface area of added premises was 6, 10 or 16 m². The completed works usually included rough construction works, installation of doors and windows, installation of electrical wiring, plastering and interior wall painting. The external finish often was not done, and in a few cases the exterior walls were only plastered, without insulation or facade.

Housing costs:

This type of intervention does not affect the cost of housing, since the house is owned by the family.

Photo 14 ADDITION OF RESIDENTIAL PREMISES



a



b



c



d

Roma families often need to add a bedroom, living room or multi-purpose room to their existing houses, mainly because of new family members and growing of children. The value of building material and works performed in Kraljevo within the framework of UN-HABITAT SIRP (photos A, B and C) was about 3,000 euros for one room. Later on, the local self-government repaired buildings damaged in the earthquake (photo D).

Structure and materials:

The conventional materials were usually used for building additions: concrete, brick, hollow clay blocks, timber, tiles, etc.

Who performed the works:

The works were usually performed by professional craftsmen or contractors, with the help of Roma families. Within the framework of UN-HABITAT SIRP, technical documentation was developed and construction works were executed by a professional company selected by the City Housing Agency through a public tender procedure. The Roma families participated in simpler and easier physical works.

How was the house used while the works were in progress:

The families normally lived in the part of the house that was not under construction.

What is the price of this model:

The amounts granted by donors for adding a room in Kraljevo equalled 3,000 euros, of which 2,000 euros were for building materials and € 1,000 for works. The cost of adding a new upper floor on the existing building in Čačak was 400 €/m².

Duration of works:

Usually it took one month of work to add one room. The reconstruction and floor addition in Čačak lasted one construction season.

Recommendations:

- In case of additions, including upward additions, municipalities should help Roma, or organisations providing Roma with support, to obtain necessary building permits.
- The part of the *Law on Planning and Construction* that specifies special types of facilities for which a building permit is not required should include the construction or upward addition of one room for the purpose of improving housing conditions.
- The amounts granted by donors for additions, including upward additions, on Roma houses should be equal to those granted to refugees and IDPs, that is - 5,000 euros per intervention.

15. Addition of sanitary facilities with external assistance

Description of model:

Many Roma families do not have sanitary facilities (bathrooms and toilets) in their houses, which seriously endangers the health of family members, especially children. The addition of sanitary facilities financed with external assistance is a model that can improve this difficult situation. According to the law, *addition* refers to the execution of construction and other works for the purpose of creating *new space beyond the existing dimensions of a facility*, making with it a new structural, functional or technical entirety⁵⁹. Waste water drainage, not only from sanitary facilities, but also from the kitchen, can lead to septic tanks, made of concrete or plastic, or to the city sewer system. The implemented projects included several houses within a settlement.

Who were the beneficiaries of this model:

Low-income Roma families owning and living in the houses without sanitary facilities were the beneficiaries of this model. These were mainly the families living in unsanitary settlements.

Who were the main actors in the implementation of this model:

Roma families, civil society organisations, international donors, municipality and housing agency were the main actors in this model. One of the EHO-RRC's conditions for the implementation of this model was the participation of family members through work engagement or acquisition of building material, either new or used.

Where was this model used:

In Serbia, the model was created in 2007 within the framework of UN-HABITAT SIRP and first implemented in the Roma settlement Grdička kosa 2 in Kraljevo, where 12 families got bathrooms with toilets. The Ecumenical Humanitarian Organisation - Roma Resource Centre (EHO-RRC) continued to use this model, mainly in Roma settlements in Vojvodina, and by 2013 this organisation added or equipped 540 bathrooms, and constructed 408 septic tanks.⁶⁰ As part of the aforementioned EHO-RRC project, 96 sanitary facilities and septic tanks were

⁵⁹ *Law on Planning and Construction*, Article 135 (Official Gazette of RS, nos. 72/09, 81/09 – corrigendum, 64/10 – CC and 24/11).

⁶⁰ Jovanović, S. (2014). *Održiva obnova romskih naselja samogradnjom, prezentacija na Drugoj regionalnoj konferenciji o stanovanju*, OSCE/ODIHR, Tirana, 26–27. 02. 2014. 02. 2014.

built in Odžaci. In Novi Sad, 123 houses in the settlements Adice and Bangladeš got a bathroom or toilet, and 90 septic tanks were built, while the funds were provided from the city budget for the connection of 60 housing units in the settlement Bangladeš to the electricity grid of Public Enterprise Elektroprivreda. Out of 20 municipalities included in the project *We are here together*, a bathroom with a toilet, or a toilet, was constructed in five municipalities in Bojnik (one house), Prokuplje (five houses), Zvezdara (one house) and Knjaževac (31 houses). Also, five houses in Kovin got septic tanks and were connected to the city water supply system, which was financed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

What was the strategic and legal basis for the implementation of this model:

The strategic basis, in a wider sense, was the *Strategy for Improvement of the Status of Roma*⁶¹ and the *Action Plan for the implementation of strategy in the field of housing*⁶². The legal basis for additions was the *Law on Planning and Construction*, which specifies the requirement of building permits and previously obtained location permits⁶³. It seems that in very few cases a building permit was obtained for the addition of sanitary facilities, although these additions were made with the knowledge of municipal authorities and with the knowledge of foreign donors who provided the funds.

Land:

The land issue was not relevant in cases where a lot or a house was owned by family members. This issue was relevant when the additions were made in some old Roma settlements, existing for several decades, where the houses were built on the land that did not belong to the family, but was publicly-owned, or owned by a company that used to be public.

Source and way of financing:

Donor or other organisations, through the municipality or non-governmental organisations, financed the construction and equipping of sanitary facilities (development of design for necessary works, purchase of materials and construction works). In some cases, Roma families participated in resolving this issue, and sometimes contributed with the purchase of some construction materials.

⁶¹ Official Gazette of RS, no. 27/09.

⁶² *Akcioni plan za sprovođenje strategije za unapređivanje položaja Roma 2013–2014*, retrieved from <http://www.ljudskaprava.gov.rs/>, 15. 03. 2013.

⁶³ Article 135 (Official Gazette of RS, nos. 72/09, 81/09 – corrigendum, 64/10 – CC and 24/11)

What was the quality of completed works:

The completed works were usually of good quality. The surface area of added sanitary facility was 1.5, 2 or 4 m². It had all installations (plumbing, sewage and electricity) and a sink, toilet seat, shower tray and water heater. Interior walls were usually fully covered with ceramic tiles, while the most common external finishing was only plaster without insulation or facade.

Photo 15 ADDITION OF SANITARY FACILITIES



a



b



c



d

The addition of bathrooms and toilets to the existing houses is one of the models that significantly improve the living conditions of families. The sanitary facilities (surface area 2–4 m²) are connected to the water supply and sewerage and their construction, within the framework of UN-HABITAT SIRP implemented in Kraljevo, cost up to 2,500 euros for one room, as shown in photos A and B. Photos C and D show the additions from Đurđevo, where EHO-RRC, constructed septic tanks in addition to bathrooms. Most of these works were executed by the Roma trained for that by EHO-RRC.

Housing costs:

This type of intervention did not affect the cost of housing, since the house was owned by the family. Some cost increase was a result of increased electricity consumption due to the built-in water heater.

Structure and materials:

The conventional materials were usually used for building additions: concrete, brick, hollow clay blocks, hydro-insulation, timber, wooden or PVC doors and windows, roof tiles, and ceramic tiles in the interior.

Who performed the works:

The works were usually performed by professional craftsmen or contractors, with the help of Roma families. In Kraljevo, the City Housing Agency contracted a professional firm, through a tender procedure, which developed the necessary technical documentation (design, bill of quantities for labour and materials) and executed works. As part of the project of adding sanitary facilities, EHO-RRC also trained Roma to perform some construction and finishing works.

How was the house used while the works were in progress:

The house was normally used for living because the scope of works was small.

What is the price of this model:

In the framework of UN-HABITAT SIRP, in 2007 in Kraljevo it cost a total of 2,500 euros to construct and equip a bathroom with a toilet, 4 m² of surface area, of which 1,500 euros was spent for materials and 1,000 euros for labour and technical documentation. The price of construction material, within the EHO-RRC project, ranged from 1,000 euros for a bathroom of 4 m² (within the previously constructed facility), and around 1,200 euros for the addition of new facility and the equipment of a bathroom sized 2-3 m², or approximately 1,400 euros for a new bathroom sized 4 m².⁶⁴ In addition, the cost of constructing septic tanks was about 300 euros per unit.

⁶⁴ Wyss, D., Bu, R. (2013). *Guide and Toolbox: Good practices to support implementation of the National Strategy for Improving the position of Roma in Serbia – Action Plan for Housing Conditions (2012–2014)*. Ecumenical Humanitarian Organisation - Roma Resource Center, Novi Sad.

Duration of works:

It took about two weeks to construct a bathroom with a toilet.

Recommendations:

- In case of the addition of sanitary facilities, municipalities should help Roma, or organisations providing Roma with support, to obtain necessary building permits for the construction of sanitary facilities.
- The amounts requested from donors for the addition of sanitary facilities and, in some cases, septic tanks to Roma houses should be equal to those requested for refugees and IDPs.
- The part of the *Law on Planning and Construction* that specifies some special types of facilities for which a building permit is not required should include the construction of bathrooms with a toilet for the purpose of improving housing conditions.

16. Repairing a house with external assistance**Definition of model:**

House repairing is a collective term that includes more types of construction works on the houses that over the time, as a result of use and life cycle, have become damaged to the point that they are unsuitable for housing. Some Roma houses were in such condition and the solution was seen in assistance with repairing. Pursuant to the *Law on Planning and Construction*, that term refers to repair, capital maintenance and regular (current) maintenance⁶⁵. *Repairing* is the execution of construction and other works on an existing facility by which the repair of appliances, plant and equipment is carried out, i.e. the replacement of structural elements of the facility, whereby the exterior elevation remains unaltered, and the safety of adjoining facilities remains unaffected⁶⁶. *Capital maintenance* is the execution of construction and building trade works, i.e. other works depending on the type of facility, aimed at improving the conditions of using the facility during exploitation⁶⁷. The most common capital maintenance works on a facility or apartment are: roof sheathing, installation of thermal and hydro insulation, roofing replacement, repair and replacement of

⁶⁵ *Law on Planning and Construction*, Article 2, paragraphs 35, 36 and 36a (Official Gazette of RS, nos. 72/09, 81/09 – corrigendum, 64/10 – CC and 24/11)

⁶⁶ *Law on Planning and Construction*, Article 2, paragraph 35.

⁶⁷ *Law on Planning and Construction*, Article 2, paragraph 36.

gutters, insulation and facade works, replacement of external doors and windows in the existing openings. *Current (regular) maintenance of facility* means the execution of works for the purpose of preventing the damage caused by using the facility or for the purpose of repairing such damage. Current maintenance works include whitewashing, painting, replacing of lining, replacing of sanitary facilities and other similar works⁶⁸.

Who were the beneficiaries of this model:

This model was used for low-income Roma families who were the owners of houses. According to the *National Strategy of Social Housing*, the beneficiaries of the programmes designed to improve housing conditions in private property, through various forms of funding, may include the household members that live in their apartments that are not suitable and can be improved, provided that these households meet certain criteria.

Main actors in the implementation of this model:

The main actors in the activities of house repairing were civil society organisations, Roma families, municipalities and housing agencies.

Where was this model used:

In the framework of UN-HABITAT SIRP, repairs were performed in 2007 in Valjevo, as an alternative model for solving housing problems, where 34 apartments in the buildings that belonged to the municipality or families were repaired and reconstructed. As regards the works of repairing Roma homes in 20 municipalities included in the project *We are here together*, this model was applied in Bojnik (10 houses), Bujanovac (four houses), Knjaževac (25 houses), Koceljeva (five houses), Novi Sad (61 houses), Prokuplje (four to five houses), Vranje (three houses), Zvezdara (five houses) and Valjevo (10 houses).

What was the strategic and legal basis for the implementation of this model:

The strategic basis for this type of works was the *National Strategy of Social Housing*⁶⁹, the *Roma Integration Strategy*⁷⁰ and the *Action Plan for the implementation of strategy in the field of housing*. The legal basis is also the *Law on Social Welfare* and relevant local decisions that envisage one-time financial assistance (urgent measures) in some cases. The

⁶⁸ *Law on Planning and Construction*, Article 2, paragraph 36a.

⁶⁹ Official Gazette of RS, no. 13/12.

⁷⁰ Official Gazette of RS, no. 27/09.

legal basis for repairs in some cases was the *Law on Planning and Construction*. None of preformed repairs had a proper approval for the execution of works, issued without first obtaining a location permit, for repairs and capital maintenance, while it is not necessary for current regular maintenance⁷¹.

Land:

Not applicable because a house already exists on the lot.

Photo 16 REPAIRING A HOUSE



a



b



c



d

This model allows achieving good results with relatively small funds. The typical works are roof structure repairs and replacement of roof tiles, repairing of walls damaged by humidity, replacement of old windows and doors. Housing conditions are significantly improved with relatively small amounts of money, i.e. 100, 200 - 1,000 euros for the repair of one house, provided by local self-governments or donors. Photos A and B are from Valjevo and they show some of the row houses before and after the intervention. Photo C shows repairing of a roof in Kraljevo, and photo D show repairing of the eaves of a house in Zrenjanin.

⁷¹ *Law on Planning and Construction*, Article 145 (Official Gazette of RS, nos. 72/09, 81/09 – corrigendum, 64/10 – CC and 24/11)

Source and way of financing:

Donor or other organisation, through the municipality or civil society organisation, financed the preparation of the priced bill of quantities, purchase of materials and execution of works. Smaller funds were provided also by local self-governments, from certain budget items, such as funds for the implementation of LAP for Roma or for the allocation of urgent assistance. In some cases, families also contributed with their labour and sometimes they purchased some building materials.

What was the quality of completed works:

The quality of works was satisfactory in most cases, which raised the comfort of living in these houses. This model allows achieving good results with relatively small funds. The typical works that were carried out were the acquisition and replacement of doors and windows (wooden or more often PVC doors and windows), then the repair of roof structure and the replacement of roof tiles, the repair of walls damaged by humidity and the like.

Housing costs:

The model does not increase the cost of housing, but may even reduce it, in particular the cost of heating.

House structure and materials:

Standard construction and finishing materials are used, while modern materials are used for hydro and thermal insulation. Second-hand construction material is sometimes used, if it is cheaper and easily available.

Who performed the works:

The works were executed mainly by skilled craftsmen engaged by the competent service of local self-government or civil society organisation in cooperation with the families. The works were rarely (in the case of larger scale works) carried out by a construction company, which was contracted by local authorities through a tender procedure.

How was the house used while the works were in progress:

The house is used while the works are in progress.

What is the price of this model:

The cost of repairs depends on the level of damage to the house that should be repaired. The funds allocated by local self-governments ranged between 100-200 euros, rarely up to 600 euros for the repair of one house. In the framework of UN-HABITAT SIRP, about 1,000 euros were spent to repair a house in a Roma settlement in Kraljevo, while between 1,500 and 2,000 euros were spent on the reconstruction of one housing unit in Valjevo, or 3,000 euros if it was a larger scale reconstruction.

Duration of works:

The duration of works varied and lasted from several weeks to several months.

Recommendations:

- The actors involved in the repairing of Roma houses and municipalities should obtain relevant documentation (for repairing and capital maintenance) or approval for the execution of works (for current maintenance).
- Roma families should be provided with (free) legal assistance in obtaining relevant property related documents⁷².

17. Completing construction of an unfinished house with external assistance**Description of model:**

Completing construction of an unfinished house usually involves the *completion of construction, finishing and installation works*, or the *completion of external finishing*. The former was applied in the case of roughly constructed houses and where it was necessary to install doors and windows, plumbing and wiring, to do plastering, roofing, etc., and to make an unfinished house habitable. Unlike roughly constructed houses, the houses with fully or partially completed interior works needed the completion of external finishing that usually included the installation of gutters, thermal insulation, facade, sidewalks around the house and so on. Some Roma houses cannot be completed because of the poverty of their owners and in such cases some external assistance is needed.

⁷² Divjak, Lazar (ur.) (2010). Vodič kroz legalizaciju romskih naselja. Beograd: Misija OEBS u Srbiji.

Who were the beneficiaries of this model:

Middle-income or lower-income Roma families who were able to construct houses roughly or with completed interior works. However, the beneficiaries of this housing model over the past period were mainly refugees and IDPs covered by various programmes of durable integration. Moreover, the *National Strategy of Social Housing*⁷³ provides that the beneficiaries of this housing model are also the owners of unsuitable apartments that can be improved, and whose income does not exceed 50% of the average income in the local self-government unit for a single-person household, which is further adjusted to the number of household members.

Who were the main actors in the implementation of this model:

Roma families, municipality, donors, micro-credit organisation and contractors.

Where was this model used:

In the framework of UN-HABITAT SIRP project, completion of houses was one of the options offered to families. The families applied for micro-credits, which enabled them to complete unfinished facilities. The unfinished houses were completed in five municipalities included in the project *We are here together*: in Bojnik (10 houses), Prokuplje (12 houses), Vranje (two houses), Knjaževac (10 houses) and Kruševac (one house).

What was the strategic and legal basis for the implementation of this model:

The strategic basis for completing the construction of houses was the *National Strategy of Social Housing* and the *Strategy for Improvement of the Status of Roma*⁷⁴ and the *Action Plan for the implementation of strategy in the field of housing*. As regards housing solutions for refugees and IDPs, the legal and strategic basis was provided in the amendments to the *Law on Refugees*⁷⁵, and also in the *National Strategy for Resolving Problems of Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons*⁷⁶, and the local plans concerning this population. No special permits or approvals were required for the completion of roughly constructed houses or for the completion of external works, because according to the law these house had to have a building permit when their construction began, and hence the completion of houses were

⁷³ Official Gazette of RS, no. 13/12.

⁷⁴ Official Gazette of RS, no. 27/09.

⁷⁵ Official Gazette of RS, no. 30/10.

⁷⁶ *National Strategy for Resolving Problems of Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons for the Period from 2011 to 2014*, retrieved from <http://www.kirs.gov.rs/articles/navigate.php?type1=14&lang=SER&date=0>, 18. 03. 2014.

covered by these permits. The houses without a building permit had to have a proof of being in the process of legalisation.

Land:

It is not relevant because these were the existing houses on the existing lots.

Source and way of financing:

The works on the completion of unfinished houses were funded by donors, through the municipalities. A number of Roma participated in these works with additional resources, and some of them took micro-credits for the construction of houses.

What was the quality of completed works:

The quality of completed works was usually high.

Housing costs:

The works on completing the house do not increase the cost of housing; on the contrary, they may reduce costs as a result of heating savings. If a micro-credit is taken, then the costs increase, but within the acceptable limits.

Structure and materials:

The materials used for finishing works were standard construction and finishing materials.

Who performed the works:

Final works, both in the interior or on the facade, were highly professional finishing works and they were executed mainly by professional craftsmen and contractors.

How was the house used while the works were in progress:

The roughly constructed houses whose interior had to be completed could not be used during works. The houses where only finishing works had to be done on the facade were used normally while the works were in progress.

What is the price of this model:

The cost of finishing works, from rough construction to completed interior, ranged from 60–100 €/m² of house. The cost of finishing facade works is about 15–25 €/m².

Duration of works:

Completing a roughly constructed house to make it habitable, but without external works, may last for several months. Usually it took between two weeks and one month to complete external works on the house.

Recommendations:

- The low-income Roma families who have managed to reach a rough construction phase in building their houses, with their own funds, deserve to be helped to complete them. Municipalities, donors and civil society organisations should work in that direction.
- Municipalities, civil society organisations and donors should pay attention to the installation of exterior thermal insulation coating as a means to increase the living comfort of the family, as well as to reduce SO² emissions.

18. Receiving building material packages**Description of model:**

Building material packages consist of a certain quantity of building materials that can be used for different works - from repairs and adaptations, through the addition of new housing unit to the existing house, to the building of new house on the site of the old one. The most important characteristic of this model of solving the housing issue is a high level of freedom that families have in deciding about their priorities concerning the existing house. The families receive building material packages from municipalities or some other donor.

Who were the beneficiaries of this model:

Depending on the situation in the field and the types of beneficiaries, the model of allocating building material packages was used mostly for the families of IDPs and refugees, and to a lesser extent, for low-income Roma families.

Who were the main actors in the implementation of this model:

The main actors were donors and international organisations, the Commissariat for Refugees and Migrations, municipalities, refugees, IDPs and Roma.

Where was this model used:

The Commissariat for Refugees and Migrations used this model a lot, and by 2013 several thousand building material packages were allocated to refugee and IDP families. The Municipality of Apatin allocated building materials (YTONG blocks, hollow clay blocks, gravel, corrugated roof panels, etc.) to Roma families. As regards 20 municipalities included in the project *We are here together*, this kind of assistance was provided to Roma families in Vranje, Bela Palanka, Prokuplje, Knjaževac, Kruševac and Odžaci. In Bojnik, building material was provided to 10 Roma families that were sent back after the relocation of settlement Gazela in Belgrade.

What was the strategic and legal basis for the implementation of this model:

The strategic basis at the national level was defined in the *Strategy of Integration and Empowerment of Roma in Serbia*, and later on, in 2009 the basis was found in the *Strategy for Improvement of the Status of Roma*⁷⁷ and the *Action Plan for the implementation of strategy in the field of housing*⁷⁸. At the local level, the basis included local strategies and LAPs. Also, in case of refugees and IDPs, the strategic basis was the *National Strategy for Resolving Problems of Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons*⁷⁹ and the LAPs that targeted these vulnerable groups of population. The legal basis depended on the type of works performed and included the obligation to have a building permit or a proof on initiated legalisation procedure or an approval for the execution of works. In some cases, the works were carried out without a building permit, although with the knowledge of municipality and its bodies and with the financial support of foreign or national donor.

Land:

The packages were allocated mainly for the houses or lots that Roma already owned.

Source and way of financing:

Donor organisations and municipalities, individually or jointly, financed the purchase of building materials, and donations have been so far the main source of funding for this

⁷⁷ Official Gazette of RS, no. 27/09.

⁷⁸ *Akcionni plan za sprovođenje strategije za unapređivanje položaja Roma 2013–2014*, retrieved from <http://www.ljudskaprava.gov.rs/>, 15. 03. 2013.

⁷⁹ *National Strategy for Resolving Problems of Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons for the Period from 2011 to 2014*, retrieved from <http://www.kirs.gov.rs/articles/navigate.php?type1=14&lang=SER&date=0>, 18. 11. 2013.

housing model. Building materials were procured through a public tender, and the selection of beneficiary families was usually conducted through a competition. The beneficiary families received building materials, and not financial resources.

What was the quality of completed works:

The quality of completed works was good in cases where the family had the possibility to engage professional craftsmen. In cases of complete self-help, without any professional assistance, there were flaws and errors.

Photo 18 RECEIVING BUILDING MATERIAL PACKAGES



a



b



c



d

Building material packages donated by an organisation, or a municipality from its own budget, is a good form of assistance to improve the living conditions of Roma. Photos A, B and C show this type of assistance implemented in the Municipality of Apatin. The families are also stimulated to use recycled materials, as shown in photo D.

Housing costs:

By receiving a building material package, the family's cost of housing does not increase.

Structure and materials:

Building material packages usually contained the material that was most commonly used in construction and finishing works. The reason for that is that a large number of people (both beneficiaries and craftsmen) have experience with commonly used materials.

Who performed the works:

Roma have organised works by themselves and often participated in less complicated works. The families engaged craftsmen for the works that required more knowledge and skills.

How was the house used while the works were in progress:

The use of the existing house while the works were in progress depended on the type of works.

What is the price of this model:

The value of building material packages received by Roma in Apatin ranged between 3,000 and 4,000 euros, while in other municipalities the value was significantly lower. In the housing programmes for refugees and IDPs, in the early phases of this model, the value of building material packages was about 2,500 euros, and later it was up to 4,000 euros. The value of building material packages allocated through the *Regional Housing Programme* ranges from 5,000 to 9,000 euros.

Duration of works:

It takes from several weeks to the entire construction season to execute these works. It all depends on the type of works for which the packages were received.

Recommendations:

- Along with building material packages, municipalities and donors should provide professional assistance of craftsmen for some specific works. Past experience has shown that despite the willingness of family members to do some work, like plumbing and wiring, they are not able to do it. Without such assistance, the package of material for building a bathroom is only partially useful.

- It is necessary to ensure that the value of building material packages received by Roma families is not lower than the value of such packages received by refugees and IDPs.

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