

Case study

Living together, Czech Republic

October 2009

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Introduction

This case study¹ is part of a series of case studies on specific housing initiatives for Roma and Travellers. It is intended to contribute to a deeper understanding of lessons learned within the context of the larger research project on the housing conditions of Roma and Travellers in the EU.²

The case examined in the present study is an inspiring story of the private initiative of a group of volunteers determined to help their fellow Ostrava residents; families who had lost housing to a flood which had struck Ostrava in 1997. The aid provided by public authorities to Roma was not seen as sufficient; Roma victims of the disaster were provided with substantially lower quality of substitute housing than non-Roma. The citizens' initiative thus aimed to offer help to people regardless of their ethnicity proving that 'it is possible to live together'.

The methodology for this case study includes qualitative information from a wide range of sources, including semi-structured interviews undertaken with ten respondents in April 2009: six Roma and four non-Roma, six women and four men; including representatives of local governments of Ostrava, civil society representatives and five representatives of the target groups of Roma beneficiaries. In addition to these respondents, several other Roma and non-Roma individuals were consulted on particular issues.

The first research stage consisted of a review of existing legislation, reports and analysis of data related to the overall housing conditions of Roma in the Czech Republic. This was followed by a review of specific data related to the Roma communities living in Ostrava. New primary data was gathered through a three-day study visit in April 2009, which involved face-to-face interviews with respondents.

¹ This case study, financed and edited by the FRA, was developed by Mr Marek Hojsik and Ms Tatjana Peric on behalf of the European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC), Budapest, and Pavee Point Travellers Centre, Dublin.

² Additional information on the housing situation of Roma in the Czech Republic can be found in: RAXEN NFP Czech Republic (2009) *Thematic Study on Housing Conditions of Roma in the Czech Republic*, available at: <http://fra.europa.eu> (06.11.2009).

1. Background information

1.1. Historical and social background

The housing conditions of Roma in the Czech Republic are largely determined by the turbulent events of the 20th Century in the area that today is the Czech Republic. The Roma population living in Czech territory before World War II was almost entirely exterminated by the regime of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia (*Reichsprotektorat Böhmen und Mähren*), which was established and controlled by Nazi Germany during 1939-1945. After the end of the war, there was an influx of Roma of Slovak origin into the Czech Republic. They generally came from a more disadvantaged socio-economic environment than the original Bohemian and Moravian Roma population. The migration of Roma in the last half century from Slovakia to the Czech Republic took place in several waves and has been at some times spontaneous and at other times initiated and controlled by the regime seeking additions to the labour force.³ In the opinion of Mr Karel Holomek, a Moravian Roma intellectual, 'The process of integration of Slovak Roma was very slow and unsuccessful.'⁴

During the communist era, Roma ethnic identity was consciously oppressed and assimilation was encouraged. One of the tools for achieving this was the 'policy of diffusion' of Roma from the less developed settlements of eastern Slovakia throughout Czechoslovakia. Some regional authorities in eastern Slovakia used that opportunity to move the most 'difficult' Roma communities to the Czech Republic.⁵

At the same time, there was a process of urbanisation. Roma were often moved into new and unfamiliar environments; people who had lived in cost-free housing they had built themselves, without the need for paid services and utilities, were suddenly lodged in municipal dwellings with regular payment obligations. The new housing was frequently located in concrete flat blocks in new satellite neighbourhoods, employee housing owned by industrial companies or in run-down, but historically valuable, houses in town centres.

The communist regime also introduced a policy of universal employment, even when this entailed artificially sustaining redundant jobs and/or ineffective

³ T. Haišman (1999) 'Romové v Československu v letech 1945-1967, vývoj institucionálního zájmu a jeho dopady', in: *Romové v České republice (1948-1998)*, Praha: Socioklub, p. 137-183.

⁴ K. Holomek (1999) 'Vývoj romské reprezentace po roce 1989 a minoritní mocenská politika vu vztahu k Romům', in: *Romové v České republice (1948-1998)*, Praha: Socioklub, p. 300.

⁵ T. Haišman (1999) 'Romové v Československu v letech 1945-1967, vývoj institucionálního zájmu a jeho dopady', in: *Romové v České republice (1948-1998)*, Praha: Socioklub, p. 137-183.

employees. The employability of unskilled labour coupled with an ideological glorification of manual labour (expressed symbolically, but also through income equalisation) functioned thus as a counter incentive to formal education and social mobility.

After the fall of communism the economic and social transition to a market economy and democracy soon changed this and individuals' socio-economic status became largely determined by their professional and social position in the previous regime, financial capital accumulated, formal qualification and skills, work experience, access to information on the labour market and integration into social networks.⁶ A substantial proportion of the Roma in Czechoslovakia lacked these prerequisites.

Conditions deteriorated for many Slovakian-born Roma after the split of Czechoslovakia in 1993, when the new Act on Czech Citizenship⁷ excluded tens of thousands of Roma from access to the labour market, welfare and many other public services and political rights. Furthermore, it made their presence in the Czech Republic illegal. The law was seen as indirectly discriminatory, since the apparently neutral provisions of the naturalisation process had a disproportionately negative impact on Roma, especially children from single parent families and children in institutional care. This process was further complicated by the attitudes of authorities who were supposed to assist in the process.⁸

Citizens of the former Czechoslovakia, who were born in Slovakia or had an administrative designation assigning them citizenship in the Slovak Republic within the Czechoslovak Federation (which was of no practical consequence before the separation), could acquire the new Czech citizenship only under certain conditions. They had to prove a registered residence (i.e. not a real one) on Czech territory for at least two years (many persons born in Slovakia lived in the Czech part of the federation without official registration), a clean criminal record for the previous five years and a release from the Slovak citizenship issued by Slovak authorities. The Act on Citizenship created a new group of non-citizens of the Czech Republic who, in spite of being settled in the country as citizens of the former Czechoslovakia, lost many of their rights. Researchers reviewing parliamentary records from the time of the enactment of the Act on Citizenship assert that the law was intentionally designed to move Roma from the Czech Republic to Slovakia.⁹

⁶ P. Kaplan (1999) 'Trh práce a Romové', in: *Romové v České republice (1948-1998)*, Praha: Socioklub, pp. 356-377.

⁷ Czech Republic/Zákon č. 40/1993 Sb. o nabývání a pozbývání státního občanství České republiky (29.12.1993).

⁸ M. Miklušáková (1999) 'Stručný nástin důsledků zákona č. 40/1993 Sb., o nabývání a pozbývání státního občanství ČR', in: *Romové v České republice (1948-1998)*, Praha: Socioklub, pp. 267-270.

⁹ B. Struhárová (1999) *Disparate impact: removing Roma from the Czech Republic*, Budapest: European Roma Rights Centre, available at:

The law was changed in 1999¹⁰ after repeated international criticism¹¹ and the procedure for the acquisition of Czech citizenship by former Czechoslovakian citizens was simplified. However, a seven-year long exclusion from citizenship, civil rights and access to public services likely prompted many Roma to fall into the vicious circle of social exclusion.

1.2. Housing situation of Roma

The process of the transformation from a centrally controlled economy to a free market has included important changes in the state housing policy (mainly in the period of 1991-1996) aimed at the creation of a functional housing market. This goal had to be achieved through the reduction of the role of the central government in the implementation of a housing policy, transfer of the initiative to municipalities and private actors, transfer of the public dwelling fund to the municipalities, privatisation of existing dwelling funds by tenants or other subjects (after 1994) and gradual deregulation of rent (which has now been completed).¹²

The transformation of the housing market had a particularly negative impact on the Roma, who did not have enough money to buy the flats they lived in from the municipalities or were not interested in doing so, since in the past they had been always provided with housing by the authorities. 'Roma often did not have resources to buy their flats from the municipality, or bought them but later resold them to businesspersons for very little money; Roma were happy to have cash, but they were not able to get new housing and found themselves homeless.'¹³ Other Roma lost their newly-purchased tenures because of debts: 'If they have property, an appraiser can include them in debt recovery, and debts are enormous in Ostrava.'¹⁴

In many cases they were not even entitled to buy their homes, either because they were old properties nationalised by the communist regime which had to be returned to their original owners, or because they were owned by large state enterprises which had to be privatised. Roma living in houses where rent was regulated by the state as they were 'first-generation' tenants, were systematically pushed out of properties which could now be capitalised on, either because of problems with regular payment of rent and utilities or

<http://www.errc.org/cikk.php?cikk=549&archiv=1> (20.04.2009).

¹⁰ Czech Republic/Zákon č. 194/1999, kterým se mění zákon č. 40/1993 Sb., o nabytí občanství České republiky, ve znění pozdějších předpisů (29.07.1999).

¹¹ See relevant annual reports of the U. S. State Department, Human Right Watch and others.

¹² E. Havelková, B. Valentová (1998) 'Komparativna analýza bytovej politiky v Slovenskej a Českej republike v rokoch 1990-1996', in: M. Potůček, I. Radičová (eds.) *Sociální politika v Čechách a na Slovensku po roce 1989*, Praha: Karolinum, pp. 231-288.

¹³ Interview with a local authority representative, Ostrava, 02.04.2009.

¹⁴ Interview with Life Together, Ostrava, 03.04.2009.

discrimination due to their ethnicity.¹⁵ Similar actions were often undertaken by the municipalities against Roma tenants in attractive houses, which remained in their possession. 'Under the communist regime, Roma were lodged in old houses in downtown, but after the Velvet Revolution these became lucrative addresses; so, Roma were removed, flats renovated and sold at high prices'.¹⁶

Such practices have also been applied by local authorities in their attempt to 'purge districts of Roma'.¹⁷ The active role of municipalities in the creation of ethnically homogenous and socially segregated areas was also stressed by local Roma respondents. As a Roma woman pointed out: 'The authorities create ghettos and then complain that there are problems; but if Roma apply for rental housing, the municipality offers them only housing in a ghetto'.¹⁸

Social workers and civic activists in Ostrava have also recorded cases in which the owners of flats increased the rent excessively, disconnected the electricity and water supplies of Roma tenants who were not in default in order to force them to move out or falsely accused them of disruptive behaviour as a pretext for cancelling their rental contracts. There are also cases of direct pressure on Roma tenants, in which other non-Roma residents petitioned against their Roma neighbours. 'We told the non-Roma inhabitants that the implication of their action is that their Roma neighbours, a solid and ambitious family with school children, would be evicted to the street, and they were sad. This is a paradox: those people are not inhuman, they do not want to make Roma homeless, but they simply do not want to live with them'.¹⁹

The drastic changes in the housing market led to the emergence of private 'bedsits' *ubytovny* [singular: *ubytovna*, lodging house], where people who have lost their regular home are accommodated in extremely modest conditions (usually entire families in a single room, with joint kitchens, bathrooms and toilets). Persons lodged in such facilities have no adequate legal protection regarding security of tenure and rents are disproportionately high, although partially covered by welfare benefits. 'It is a very good business. In only one of the Municipal Districts of Ostrava, there are 12 such lodging houses, plus several informal ones. They put seven or eight persons into one room and all this is paid by the state'.²⁰ 'This is a last resort and rent is very high; if people do not pay, they are thrown immediately on the street'.²¹

According to media reports these lodging houses are not only overcrowded, but the rent can be higher than in newly built housing: the monthly rent for each

¹⁵ A. Baršová (2002) 'Problémy bydlení etnických menšin a trendy k rezidenční segregaci v České republice', in: P. Víšek (ed.) *Romové ve městě*, Praha: Socioklub, pp. 3-42.

¹⁶ Interview with a local authority representative, Ostrava, 02.04.2009.

¹⁷ Interview with a Roma respondent, 02.04.2009.

¹⁸ Interview with a Roma respondent, 03.04.2009.

¹⁹ Interview with Life Together, Ostrava, 03.04.2009.

²⁰ Interview with a local authority representative, Ostrava, 02.04.2009.

²¹ Interview with Life Together, Ostrava, 03.04.2009.

person can be up to 3,000 CZK (111.44 EUR²²) and it is often paid directly to the owners of the lodging houses by the social affairs departments of the welfare system. Media reports note that authorities do not act against such practices fearing the consequences of closing such facilities, as hundreds of Roma would find themselves homeless.²³

Many Roma are concentrated in socially excluded areas. It is estimated that there are 250,000-300,000 Roma in the Czech Republic.²⁴ Research initiated by *Ministerství práce a sociálních věcí ČR (MPSV)* [Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the Czech Republic (MLSA)] and carried out in 2005-2006 identified 310 socially excluded localities (identified by their inhabitants or their social environment as 'Roma')²⁵ in 167 municipalities.²⁶ Approximately 60,000-80,000 persons live in such areas, where unemployment reaches to 90-100 per cent. The research found that most of these socially excluded locations emerged or grew considerably between 1996 and 2006.²⁷ Dwellings in such socially excluded ethnically segregated areas are mainly owned by municipalities (58 per cent) with a minority in private ownership (21 per cent).²⁸

Ostrava is the administrative centre of *Moravskoslezský kraj* [Moravian-Silesian Region], where the MLSA research identified 28 socially excluded Roma settlements in ten municipalities with approximately 10,000-10,500 inhabitants. Ten socially excluded localities were recorded in the territory of *Statutární město Ostrava* [City of Ostrava] alone, which is divided into 23 *městské obvody* [singular: *městský obvod*, Municipal District].²⁹ Many of them include dwellings built before or during World War II as colonies for mine workers and have been poorly maintained since.

A large number of dwellings occupied by Roma and non-Roma in Ostrava are owned by a private Cyprus-based company RPG RE, which has privatised the former state-owned mining giant OKD (Mines of Ostrava and Karviná). Today, the RPG own up to 45,000 flats occupied by more than 100,000 persons in

²² Conversion rate 26,92 CZK = 1 EUR is used in this study.

²³ *Ubytovny: jak žijí ti nejchudší?*, MF Dnes (25.10.2008), available at: http://www.romea.cz/index.php?id=detail&detail=2007_5112.

²⁴ Sdružení Dzeno, *Brief Analysis of Roma Migration from Slovakia to the Czech Republic*, available at: <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cerd/docs/ngos/sdruzeni2.doc>.

²⁵ Socially excluded localities are characterised by ethnic segregation, spatial exclusion and poor quality housing.

²⁶ *Analýza sociálně vyloučených romských lokalit a absorpční kapacity subjektů působících v této oblasti* (2006), Praha: GAC, available at:

http://www.mpsv.cz/files/clanky/3043/Analýza_romských_lokalit.pdf (21.04.2009).

²⁷ *Analýza sociálně vyloučených romských lokalit a absorpční kapacity subjektů působících v této oblasti* (2006), Praha: GAC, p. 16, available at:

http://www.mpsv.cz/files/clanky/3043/Analýza_romských_lokalit.pdf (21.04.2009).

²⁸ *Analýza sociálně vyloučených romských lokalit a absorpční kapacity subjektů působících v této oblasti* (2006), Praha: GAC, p. 16, available at:

http://www.mpsv.cz/files/clanky/3043/Analýza_romských_lokalit.pdf (21.04.2009).

²⁹ See an interactive map of socially excluded Roma localities, which is one of the outputs of the MLSA's research, available at: http://www.esfer.cz/mapa/int_CR.html.

Northern Moravia. Tenants claim that the RPG RE does not maintain the dwellings properly and has requested the right to buy the flats for the non-commercial price offered to tenants of the formerly state-owned housing in the late 1990s. But as the contract between the Czech Republic and the company on privatisation of the OKD from 2004 was never publicly released, the status of the tenants (both non-Roma and Roma) in these flats remains unclear.³⁰

1.3. Institutional responses to the situation

The national housing policy *Koncepce bytové politiky* [Concept of Housing Policy] adopted by the Czech government in 2005,³¹ changed the role of the state from providing housing to providing direct financial support to individuals and municipalities for construction and reconstruction of housing and technical infrastructure, support of the mortgage market and governmental loans and indirect financial support through tax relief. Special attention is given to support the development of rental housing by municipalities, including supported social housing for disadvantaged groups.

The competent ministry is the *Ministerství pro místní rozvoj ČR (MMR)* [Ministry for Regional Development of the Czech Republic (MRD)], which implements the *Podprogram Podpora výstavby podporovaných bytů* [Subprogram Support for the Construction of Subsidised Flats]. MRD's binding document on grants for social housing, to be provided in 2009,³² sets support for two kinds of disadvantaged groups and respective types of subsidised flats: 1) elderly (70+) or disabled persons (care flats) and 2) socially vulnerable persons who do not have access to standard housing (starter flats). The document provides examples of target groups to which a starter flat can be provided: persons leaving residential institutions (such as prisons and social care/help facilities), members of ethnic minorities and refugees.

The grant for subsidised flats can be provided to municipalities only. The support is up to 600,000 CZK (22,288 EUR) per dwelling for care flats and 550,000 per dwelling for starter flats (or 250,000 CZK/9,287 EUR for the modification of an existing flat). A special bonus of 50,000 CZK (1,857 EUR) per flat is given for the construction of energy saving buildings. Dwellings supported by the government must remain in the property of the municipality for 20 years and the rent cannot exceed 52.70 CZK (1.96 EUR) per square metre (the MRD can modify the limit in the future). The flats can be leased only to persons whose income within the past 12 months did not exceed 75 per cent

³⁰ *Lidé z bývalých bytů OKD demonstrovali v Ostravě za jejich koupi*, České noviny (20.04.2009), available at: <http://www.ceskenoviny.cz/regiony/moravskoslezsky/zpravy/lide-z-byvalych-bytu-okd-demonstrovali-v-ostrave-za-jejich-koupi/372249> (21.04.2009).

³¹ Czech Republic/Uznesení vlády č. 292/2005 (16.03.2005), the document in English available at: http://is.muni.cz/el/1456/podzim2006/PVTRPS/um/housing_policy_concept2005.pdf? (20.04.2009).

³² Czech Republic/Rozhodnutí ministra pro místní rozvoj č. 3/2009 (15.01.2009).

of the average wage in the Czech Republic (or 100 per cent for two-member households, 130 per cent for three-member, 140 per cent for four-member, 150 per cent for five-member and larger households). The lease contract can be concluded only for a limited period of two years.

The MRD also provides grants for non-profit organisations providing services related to diverse issues of housing. Since 2004, one of the grant recipients has been the *Asociace občanských poraden (AOP)* [Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux (ACAB)], which includes two specialised Roma advice bureaux *Jekhetane* in Ostrava.

Two types of housing benefits are offered to low income families through the welfare system: *příspěvek na bydlení* [housing allowance] which is part of the social support system³³ and *doplatek na bydlení* [supplement for housing] which is part of the aid offered to cover material needs.³⁴

The aim of the **housing allowance** is to assist low-income families in covering costs related to housing (i.e. rent, utilities). The allowance is means tested: property owners or tenants registered as permanent residents are entitled to this allowance if 30 per cent (in Prague, 35 per cent) of the family income is insufficient to cover housing costs, while at the same time it is lower than the prescriptive housing costs set by law (see Annex, Table 1).³⁵ The housing allowance amounts to the difference between the prescriptive costs and 30 per cent (or 35 per cent) of the income of the household.

The **supplement for housing** is an additional measure designed for people in material need whose income, even after receiving a housing allowance, is insufficient to cover housing costs. The benefit is paid by the municipality to home owners or tenants who are entitled to a living and a housing allowance. In special cases the municipal office may consider someone living in short term accommodation, such as lodging houses, eligible for the housing supplement. Those receiving a housing supplement are obliged to accept cheaper housing options proposed by the municipality; otherwise the entitlement for the supplement is withdrawn.

The amount of the housing supplement is calculated as the difference between the 'justified housing costs' and the sum of the paid housing allowance and income exceeding the 'amount for living'. The 'amount for living' is calculated on the basis of the Living and Subsistence Minimum.³⁶ The 'justified housing

³³ Czech Republic/Zákon č. 117/1995 Sb., o státní sociální podpoře (26.05.1995).

³⁴ Czech Republic/Zákon č. 111/2006 Sb., o pomoci v hmotné nouzi (14.03.2006).

³⁵ The prescriptive housing costs are set as average housing costs based on the size of the municipality and the number of members of the household. In the case of rented flats they include a proportion of the rent in accordance with the Rent Act and similar costs for residents of cooperative flats and flat owners. They also include the cost of services and energy. Prescriptive housing costs are calculated on the basis of reasonable sizes of flats for the number of persons permanently residing in them. <http://www.mpsv.cz/en/1603> (19.05.09).

³⁶ Czech Republic/Zákon č. 110/2006 Sb., o životním a existenčním minimu (14.03.2006).

costs' include rent up to the level of 'target rent' (set by the MRD in function of region, population of municipality, quality of housing and gradual deregulation of the rents)³⁷ and utilities. For example, the target rent for the City of Ostrava in 2009 is set at 41.64 CZK (1.547 EUR) per sq. metre per month or 37.48 CZK (1.392 EUR) per sq. metre per month in case of dwellings of lower quality. However this limitation of the amount of rent is widely legally evaded by the lodging houses by billing all expenses related to accommodation as 'services'.³⁸

According to the MLSA³⁹ the dual housing-related benefit system was introduced in order to decentralise part of the decision-making process for benefit entitlement to the municipalities. Thus while the housing allowance is paid for by the state, the supplement for housing is paid by the municipalities. In this way municipalities have an incentive to prevent the evictions of those dependent on housing benefits and their subsequent move into private lodging houses that exploit both themselves and the public social welfare system. Nevertheless, lodging houses have not ceased to exist, both because of pressure from their owners and because municipalities have no alternative housing available for their tenants.⁴⁰

³⁷ Czech Republic/Sdělení MMR o rozřídění obcí do velikostních kategorií podle počtu obyvatel, o územním rozčlenění obcí seskupením katastrálních území, o výši základních cen za 1 m² podlahové plochy bytů, o cílových hodnotách měsíčního nájemného za 1m² podlahové plochy bytu, o maximálních přírůstcích měsíčního nájemného a o postupu při vyhledání maximálního přírůstku nájemného pro konkrétní byt (11.06.2008), available at: <http://www.kurzy.cz/zakony/214-2008-sdeleni-mmr-najemne-vypocet-2009/> (21.04.2009).

³⁸ *Vyhodnocení orientačního šetření k zákonu o pomoci v hmotné nouzi a k aplikačnímu programu OKnouze po půl roce účinnosti (pohled pracovníků orgánů pomoci v hmotné nouzi)* (non-dated) Ministerství práce a sociálních věcí ČR, available at: http://www.mpsv.cz/tmp/hmotna_nouze/Metodicke_pokyny/Vyhodnoceni_orientacniho_setreni/Vyhodnocen%C3%AD%20orienta%C4%8Dn%C3%ADho%20%C5%A1et%C5%99en%C3%AD%20ZPHN.rtf (21.04.2009).

³⁹ *Změna systému má motivovat k práci, tisková zpráva (17.02.2005)* Ministerství práce a sociálních věcí ČR, available at: <http://www.mpsv.cz/files/clanky/106/170205.pdf> (21.04.2009).

⁴⁰ *Ubytovny: jak žijí ti nejchudší?*, MF Dnes (25.10.2008), available at: http://www.romea.cz/index.php?id=detail&detail=2007_5112 (21.04.2009).

2. Case study – Coexistence Village

2.1. Project description

The **title of the project** is *Vesnička soužití* [Coexistence Village].⁴¹

The **organisation leading the implementation** was *Vzájemné soužití, o. s.* [Life Together Association].⁴² Today the Coexistence Village is operated by *Diecézní charita ostravsko-opavská (DCHOO)* [Ostrava-Opava Diocese Charity (OODC)].⁴³

The Coexistence Village project is an NGO driven **initiative** involving volunteers and civic mobilisation. It aimed to provide both social services and the construction of new housing. The initiative **addressed** the need to deal with the housing problems of Roma who had lost their homes after a flood in July 1997. The flood affected one third of the city of Ostrava; approximately 2,000 houses were flooded and about 15,000 persons had to be evacuated.⁴⁴ Among the hardest hit areas was a marginalised neighbourhood in Hrušov (Municipal District Slezská Ostrava), where many Roma lived. Some houses in Hrušov had to be demolished as their foundations were affected; infrastructure was also damaged and damp became a health risk for inhabitants of homes that were not destroyed by the flood. According to local activists, Roma flood victims were generally provided with substitute accommodation or housing of a significantly lower standard than the non-Roma flood victims.⁴⁵

The **objective** of the initiative was to provide new housing to flood victims who lost their homes. A new neighbourhood with 54 dwellings was planned; half of them were to be allocated to Roma and the other half to non-Roma tenants. Financial constraints reduced the number of dwellings to 30, out of which one third was allocated to Roma families, another third to non-Roma families and the remaining third to mixed families.

⁴¹ The title could be translated also as *Living Together Village* that would make a direct reference to the *Life Together Association*, which initiated and implemented the project; however the association uses the translation *Coexistence Village* on their webpage and this English title is therefore used in the present study.

⁴² www.vzajemnesouziti.cz (21.04.2009).

⁴³ www.dchoo.caritas.cz, project-specific details available at: www.vesnickasouziti.caritas.cz (21.04.2009).

⁴⁴ Czech Republic/Ostravská univerzita v Ostravě (2008) *Atlas životního prostředí v Ostravě*, Ostrava: Ostravská univerzita, available at: http://gis.osu.cz/atlas/voda_3_2.html (20.04.2009).

⁴⁵ See also: E. Sobotka (year not given) *Life under the bridge: ghettoising Roma in Lower Hrušov, Ostrava, Czech Republic*. Budapest: European Roma Rights Centre, available at: <http://www.errc.org/cikk.php?cikk=842&archiv=1> (15.08.2009).

The initiative started as a voluntary effort (social work, community activities, charity) to help 27 Roma families accommodated temporarily in construction site cabins in a marginalised neighbourhood of Liščina provided by the municipality after the flood. When the volunteers realised that the municipality would not provide any substitute housing, the initiative started to focus on the procurement of new housing. The **main activities** planned to achieve this objective included: the planning of the technical part of the project by an architect; the acquisition of a construction site by the city of Ostrava; site clearance and preparation by future tenants; fundraising and management by the Life Together Association; the construction of the housing by an external supplier and future tenants; and finally, the provision of social services within the new neighbourhood.

The **time frame** of the project: social assistance, community and advocacy activities started after the flood in July 1997. The construction site was provided in 1999, the construction of the Coexistence Village started in November 2000 and was completed in August 2002.⁴⁶ The village is **located** in Muglinov, close to an industrial area on the outskirts of the Municipality of Slezská Ostrava.

The **target group** was defined from the start as both the Roma and non-Roma residents who had lost their homes in the flood, but special assistance was given to the Roma living in substitute accommodation in construction site cabins in Liščina, where the Life Together Association started a community centre.

The total **budget** for the Coexistence Village, composed of 30 family-houses and a community centre, reached 66.1 million CZK (2,455,423 EUR). The money came from different sources, but mainly the Czech government, the City of Ostrava and various other donors.⁴⁷ The City Authority of Ostrava also provided the land, which it acquired from a private owner for 5.5 million CZK (204,309 EUR). The supporting activities in the Coexistence Village are funded through regular grants from the MLSA, the City of Ostrava or other sources. The operational costs of the Coexistence Village are approximately five million CZK (185,736 EUR), according to its manager. The management and maintenance costs of the Coexistence Village are paid through the rent.

2.2. Main elements

Partnership and cooperation were essential for the success of the initiative. The Life Together Association assumed the overall co-ordination of the project and covered part of the costs through successful fundraising. The Czech government provided the necessary construction funds to the church-based charitable organisation OODC, since the municipality of Slezská Ostrava was

⁴⁶ For a detailed timeline, see Annex 1, Table 2.

⁴⁷ For a list of donors, see Annex 1, Table 3.

not prepared to apply for a government grant.⁴⁸ In order to attract donors, the bishop of Ostrava-Opava, personally guaranteed the completion of the project adding to its credibility. Before the start of the project, the municipality of Slezská Ostrava became involved, especially in selecting future tenants, through their Roma advisor who conducted fieldwork with Roma families.

Two key elements of the project were **innovation and creativity**. It is rare for NGOs to lead housing projects; they are usually designed and implemented by local public authorities. As a representative of Life Together explained: ‘We had a very good reputation here in Ostrava and we were lucky that I was appointed to the first *Rada vlády pro lidská práva* [Council of the Czech Government for Human Rights], which is led by the commissioner Petr Uhl.’⁴⁹ Mr Uhl, a prominent intellectual, was personally committed to the project and arranged the involvement of the OODC in the initiative, which convinced the Czech government to make an exception to the formal rules that only permit allocation of government funds for housing to municipalities, by approving a grant for the OODC: ‘The OODC was seen as an institution stable and credible enough to receive a large government grant’.⁵⁰

Another innovative element, which helped the initiative gain widespread support, was its constant effort to counteract common anti-Roma stereotypes: ‘We were in the media every day, we really tried’,⁵¹ said a representative of Life Together. The role of the media was very important, as they kept the public informed about the initiative and activities of the association. ‘When Roma who had lost their housing in the former locality (seen as a ghetto) were moved into provisional construction site cabins, everybody expected a catastrophe. But the catastrophe did not happen, and this has drawn the attention of the media’.⁵²

A **multifaceted approach** to the problems of the target group was used, which also included activities oriented to peoples’ needs other than housing. The involvement of the Life Together Association among homeless Roma flood victims started as social work, counselling and community support activities. These activities, largely carried out today by OODC, continued throughout the planning and construction phase of the housing project. Through such ongoing support, the problems which commonly threaten marginalised communities, especially excessive debts, rarely arose, and were dealt with successfully when they did. The village was designed with a community centre, where social workers operate and where workshops take place, including a youth club.

The social workers also provide advice on household financial management and prudent energy use. ‘In the beginning it was difficult. People moved in from a relatively unattractive environment and wanted to furnish their new flats as well

⁴⁸ Interview with Life Together, Ostrava, 03.04.2009.

⁴⁹ Interview with Life Together, Ostrava, 02.04.2009.

⁵⁰ Interview with OODC, Ostrava, 02.04.2009.

⁵¹ Interview with Life Together, Ostrava, 02.04.2009.

⁵² Interview with Life Together, Ostrava, 02.04.2009.

as possible. So, many of them took out loans. Therefore, we help them to set up and follow repayment plans. About half of the concerned families are out of the problems now and with the rest, we keep working. The issue of debts is crucial, because if a family falls into the vicious circle of debts, it stops functioning normally, it is at risk of eviction and then especially the children are at risk,' explained a respondent.⁵³

The community activities focus also on pre-school preparation for the children: According to the OODC, no children from the Coexistence Village have been placed into 'special schools' intended for pupils with intellectual disabilities.⁵⁴ The community centre also organises after-school support assisting pupils with their homework.

The community centre and its services, mainly social work *and* community activities, are accessible and used not only by inhabitants of the Coexistence Village, but also by residents of neighbouring socially excluded or marginalised areas. According to the OODC, 'the community centre provides three types of social services – social counselling, low-threshold club for children and activation services, which means fieldwork with families. These services are not limited to a target group from the village, in fact, concerning the children's club, 90 per cent of the kids are not from the village, they are mainly from Liščina [...] We place a strong emphasis on counselling. A big problem in our welfare system is that it does not take into account that there are people who are not oriented within it. Many of them are not able to analyse the situation and anticipate the consequences, they need support in many situations, which somebody from the mainstream society would not even realise.'⁵⁵ Social workers also facilitate communication with the municipality or other public institutions. Social workers accompany clients to the municipal office or other authorities as requested, or explain the rules and procedures for official correspondence. The municipality sometimes sends Roma who are resident elsewhere to the village to seek assistance there.

One of the main motives and central principles of the project was to **promote equality and non-discrimination** in access to adequate housing. After the flood, municipal authorities had accommodated Roma flood victims in substandard accommodation, located in areas condemned as unfit for habitation by the *Útvar hlavního architekta Magistrátu města Ostravy* [Unit of the Main Architect of the City of Ostrava].⁵⁶ According to Life Together, 'only Roma

⁵³ Interview with OODC, Ostrava, 02.04.2009.

⁵⁴ On the placement of Roma children in special schools, see: ECtHR, Grand Chamber Judgement, *D.H. and Others v. The Czech Republic*, 57325/00, 13 November 2007, or: EUMAP *Equal access to quality education for Roma*, available at: http://www.eumap.org/topics/minority/reports/roma_education (23.04.2009).

⁵⁵ Interview with OODC, Ostrava, 02.04.2009.

⁵⁶ See: E. Sobotka, *Life under the bridge: ghettoising Roma in Lower Hrušov, Ostrava, Czech Republic*. Budapest: European Roma Rights Centre, available at: <http://www.errc.org/cikk.php?cikk=842&archiv=1> (15.08.2009).

families were accommodated in the construction site cabins.⁵⁷ Lower quality housing was allocated only to the Roma and exclusively Roma were accommodated in construction site cabins installed in the socially marginalised neighbourhood of Liščina inhabited mostly by Roma. A non-Roma respondent commented: ‘The municipality was not willing to address the situation; I guess it was to a large extent because those people were Roma. My experience is that the non-Roma got substitute housing first. And Roma, even those whose flats had been totally demolished by the disaster, got only construction site cabins.’⁵⁸

As a Roma respondent explained: ‘The municipality did not know what to do with us. All municipal flats in Hrušov were uninhabitable. People had the opportunity to rent expensive flats on a commercial basis or to stay [in damaged flats]. However, it was not possible to stay there for a long time as the infrastructure was destroyed and flooded houses were attacked by mould. So the municipality allocated a flat in a bad remote location for us; it was a low-standard flat with solid fuel heating.’⁵⁹

This unequal treatment of the Roma was one of the main push factors for the involvement of the Life Together association leading eventually to the concept of the Coexistence Village, a real living example of how to promote equal treatment for Roma and non-Roma in need. This was not always easy: ‘In my mind, I must sometimes fight with this principle. It is very hard if you have to choose whom you can help according to an ethnic pattern. However, among Roma there is a much higher proportion of people in social need.’⁶⁰

The tenants of the new housing in Coexistence Village were selected according to five criteria defined by the institutions involved in the project (Life Together, OODC and the municipality):

- Having a registered residence in Hrušov,
- being a flood victim,
- social dependency (determined using family income),
- acceptance of the principle of coexistence between Roma and non-Roma,
- participation in the construction work.

Preference was given to multigenerational households. ‘Each family had to fulfil all the criteria, a Roma advisor from the municipality of Slezská Ostrava participated in the selection process and two other persons helped us to find the right non-Roma families’, according to a respondent from Life Together.⁶¹

⁵⁷ Interview with Life Together, Ostrava, 02.04.2009.

⁵⁸ Interview with a non-Roma respondent, inhabitant of the Co-existence Village, 03.04.2009.

⁵⁹ Interview with a Roma respondent, 02.04.2009.

⁶⁰ Interview with OODC, Ostrava, 02.04.2009.

⁶¹ Interview with Life Together, Ostrava, 03.04.2009.

Another principle central to the initiative was the active **involvement of the target group in decision-making during all stages of the project from design to implementation**. The author of the idea of the Coexistence Village said: ‘The original design of the housing changed. It had been developed by an architect, selected through public competition, in his office, but the final picture was born on the construction lot. The architect was here and discussed the design with the people who had to live in the houses.’⁶² Then the future inhabitants had to take part in the construction. One of the conditions for receiving a house was the contribution of 200 volunteer hours per family. ‘But in fact, they worked much more,’ said a representative of Life Together.⁶³ A Roma respondent added: ‘I worked here as coordinator and sometimes there were problems with discipline, some people were lazy. We had to go and call them to come. If somebody did not come to work three times, he/she was excluded from the project. But most of them succeeded.’⁶⁴

Residents of the Coexistence Village participated in the selection of new tenants if any flats became free: ‘There is a meeting where all the prospective families present themselves. Then the inhabitants vote and choose among them; the applicant family which receives the most votes will get the rental contract. Each household from the village has one vote. Sometimes it is sad that we can help only one and others walked off unsatisfied’.⁶⁵

Initially participation in the daily administration of the Coexistence Village was through representatives of the residents in a village managing board, which was in charge of decisions regarding the operation of the neighbourhood and the community centre, the pre-selection of tenants, handling rule violations, controlling the budget, deciding on repair works, etc. After the withdrawal of the Life Together association in 2007, the OODC managed the housing without involving the residents. Some, however, indicated their preference for the previous system: ‘When the Life Together managed the Village, we used to have a managing board, composed of representatives of the association, municipality, OODC and tenants. The board used to assist us in the selection of the applicants, but also controlled the management of the Village and decided on the use of the money; it used to be very transparent. We are going to try to enforce that the council is re-established, as they should keep controlling the OODC, which now manages the Village alone.’⁶⁶

The **interaction between the tenants and local authorities** is very important and was ensured from the start of the project: a Roma advisor from Slezská Ostrava was directly involved in the selection of future beneficiaries. Later, one representative of the municipality of Slezská Ostrava and one representative of the City of Ostrava, both Roma, were members of the managing board of the

⁶² Interview with Life Together, 02.04.2009.

⁶³ Interview with Life Together, 02.04.2009.

⁶⁴ Interview with a Roma respondent, 03.04.2009.

⁶⁵ Interview with a Roma respondent, 03.04.2009.

⁶⁶ Interview with a Roma respondent, 03.04.2009.

Coexistence Village. Following the dissolution of the managing board, the regular interaction of the tenants with the local authorities is facilitated by the social workers from the community centre and through the Roma advisor within the municipality or the Roma coordinator within the City authority.

There were tensions before the start of the project, as the majority of tenants of the new houses in the Coexistence Village lived in the municipality of Slezská Ostrava before the flood. According to a respondent: ‘The Municipal District did not want people from Moravská Ostrava; each mayor tends to help only his/her own inhabitants’.⁶⁷

A representative of Life Together remembered: ‘We started a series of initiatives: a legal action against the municipality, a community event, a protest demonstration. It was also crucial that some of the non-Roma flood victims joined us. This gave us credibility, even though the demonstration was illegal – we did not know that we needed to have an authorisation. We were in the media every day. And people did trust us; non-Roma people also used to come and seek advice.’⁶⁸

A Roma respondent added: ‘The mayor of the City of Ostrava was concerned about negative public reactions. He received a petition signed by 30 persons against the construction of a “Roma village”. However, we explained to him that when Roma had moved into Liščina, around 700 persons had signed a protest petition. The decrease of the number of opponents meant that we had gained the trust of the majority. So he requested the money for the purchase of the plot from the government.’

The Living Together association and later the community centre in the Coexistence Village focused particularly **on women and children** in their support activities. ‘We have specialised programmes for mothers taking care of children, for housewives. We try to help them with their children and arrange some activities focused on handwork; it is helpful for socially weak families, because they can make products themselves, which they otherwise would have to buy. We also have a specialised activity for unemployed women, where they can learn how to prepare a CV, search for job opportunities and present themselves at an interview,’ explained a respondent from OODC.⁶⁹ The activities focusing on children include pre-school preparation and the club provides help with homework.

The special situations of women and old people were taken into account during construction work: ‘People worked here and those who could not, such as women or seniors, helped or guarded the construction place in order that the material was not stolen.’⁷⁰

⁶⁷ Interview with a local authority representative, Ostrava, 02.04.2009.

⁶⁸ Interview with Life Together, 02.04.2009.

⁶⁹ Interview with OODC, Ostrava, 03.04.2009.

⁷⁰ Interview with a Roma respondent, 02.04.2009.

The **main difficulties** encountered by the initiative related to funding. Life Together with the assistance of the Dutch SPOLU Foundation succeeded in raising a substantial amount of money for the Coexistence Village, but local authorities were not willing to co-operate and assure the necessary co-funding, despite support from the Czech government. A representative of Life Together said: ‘We met the director of the Dutch foundation who had experience in supporting Roma housing projects. He helped us to collect up to 40 per cent of necessary funds from different international sources, but the international donors requested co-funding by Czech authorities.’⁷¹

Since the Municipal District of Slezská Ostrava, where the project had to be implemented, would not apply for a government grant, the OODC joined the project. The government adopted a decree which allocated an exceptional grant of 16.5 million CZK (612,927 EUR) for co-funding of the project to the OODC in 1999.⁷² In autumn 2001, the government approved a second decree on the provision of an additional grant of 9 million CZK (334,324 EUR) to complete the construction.⁷³

Security of tenure remains an issue for the Coexistence Village. On the one hand, housing in the village has the features of a social service – assisted social housing, which is usually a temporary solution. On the other hand, the village has been constructed as permanent housing for flood victims who lost their homes. As OODC explained: ‘from the beginning, the tenants have had limited lease contracts for a period of one year and if everything was fine, they were renewed on an annual basis. However, they were provided with these flats, as if with permanent housing. Therefore, we seek to give them unlimited contracts, if they respect the lease conditions. There are six families with unlimited contracts so far.’⁷⁴

The whole project is expensive – in terms of initial investment as well as operational costs. ‘It has been an expensive project which helps only a limited number of people. We would have preferred if for the same money twice as many people were included. The architect has tried to make it economically efficient and energy saving, but there were extra costs for the infrastructure and sewage plant, because it was a construction on an empty plot and the infrastructure in that location was missing. For example, reconstructing an older house would have been much cheaper.’⁷⁵

In addition, living costs in the houses in the Coexistence Village are seen as high by some. ‘There is gas heating and it is expensive. For example, the

⁷¹ Interview with Life Together, 02.04.2009.

⁷² Czech Republic/Usnesení vlády ČR č. 987/1999 o podpoře výstavby Vesničky Soužití v Ostravě - Muglinově (22.09.1999).

⁷³ Czech Republic/ Usnesení vlády ČR č. 143/2002 o o změně závazných ukazatelů státního rozpočtu České republiky na rok 2002, rozpočtové kapitoly Ministerstva pro místní rozvoj a rozpočtové kapitoly Všeobecná pokladní správa (11.02.2002).

⁷⁴ Interview with OODC, Ostrava, 02.04.2009.

⁷⁵ Interview with a local authority representative, Ostrava, 02.04.2009.

monthly rent is 2,550 CZK (94.73 EUR), and electricity is 1,000 CZK (37.15 EUR), but the monthly advance payment for the consumption of gas is even more than 3,000 CZK (111.44 EUR)⁷⁶ said a Roma tenant. The Life Together association explained that at the time of design and construction of the Coexistence Village, gas was the cheapest medium and they did not expect such a radical increase in its price. ‘The rent itself has been lower than in other dwellings in Ostrava, or in municipal rental housing, but then the prices of utilities started to rise. Since the houses are quite large, the utility costs are too high for socially weak families,’ concluded a respondent from Life Together.⁷⁷

Despite a **lack of a formal evaluation** of the project, all residents interviewed consider the Coexistence Village as a **significant success**. ‘When it started, the majority thought that Gypsies would destroy the village soon; many said that they would not live there. But now, they see that nothing bad happened and now they would like to live here,’ said a Roma respondent.⁷⁸ Another respondent agreed: ‘People did not trust and were sceptical. But the initiative did not collapse; on the contrary, it is developing.’⁷⁹

Despite the obvious success of this initiative, it has not been duplicated in the Czech Republic nor have the lessons learned had a significant **impact on relevant policies**. Government grants are still limited to municipalities (NGOs and other entities remain ineligible as applicants) and support activities are dependent on yearly project-based funding, which does not allow for a longer-term planning perspective. ‘We have been contacted by the MRD, they wanted to know our experiences, but I do not see any sign that it would be reflected in any policies,’ said a respondent from OODC.⁸⁰

The **potential for mainstreaming** in the present case consists mainly in the use of community social work and the application of the several principles which contributed to the success of the Coexistence Village project. However there is no evidence that the project’s elements have been mainstreamed.

Some legal provisions have also created problems. As a respondent noted, ‘We have formally separated the housing component from other activities. From the rent paid by the tenants, we pay part of the estate management costs, insurance of the estate, part of the costs of the sewage plant and use the rest for repairs.’⁸¹ However, according to the law, non-for-profit organisations, such as the Village or the OODC cannot create reserve funds where money for larger investments or repairs can accumulate. ‘In such a case we will have to take a loan and then repay it from the rents,’ the respondent concluded.⁸²

⁷⁶ Interview with a Roma respondent, 02.04.2009.

⁷⁷ Interview with Life Together, Ostrava, 02.04.2009.

⁷⁸ Interview with a Roma respondent, 03.04.2009.

⁷⁹ Interview with a local authority representative, Ostrava, 02.04.2009.

⁸⁰ Interview with OODC, Ostrava, 03.04.2009.

⁸¹ Interview with OODC, Ostrava, 03.04.2009.

⁸² Interview with OODC, Ostrava, 03.04.2009.

With regards to the project's potential for **transferability**, all the interviewees agreed that it is necessary to continue with initiatives focused on the housing of vulnerable groups, especially Roma, and that the model of housing with supporting social services, employed in the Coexistence Village is the right formula to approach the housing issues of such groups. However, there are two important principles which have to be respected, if the model is reproduced: the necessity of co-operation with the municipality; and the location of the housing, which should not be segregated. 'The locality can be revitalised, houses can be beautiful, but if it is spatially excluded, it will make a small difference in peoples' lives,' said a respondent.⁸³

When speaking about the **most important lessons learnt** within the Coexistence Village initiative, a respondent highlighted the positive effect of combining housing and social work, since it had a positive effect of the intervention and its sustainability: 'After several years, the overall wellbeing in the neighbourhood did not decrease, the buildings are not damaged and this signals something.'⁸⁴ Alternately, there is the problem of cost relative to the number of beneficiaries: 'For the same amount of money, help could be provided to a larger number of people.'⁸⁵ The creator of the concept of the Coexistence Village from the Life Together association admitted: 'It was our first child, a very nice child, but very expensive, too.'⁸⁶

The Life Together association plans new projects based on the principles and experience from that initiative: 'It will not be purely Roma, but rather will integrate Roma and non-Roma, and it will focus mainly on young families.'⁸⁷ One Roma respondent concluded: 'I believe that this initiative was born to eradicate that evil conviction that Roma are socially inadaptable people and non-Roma have only troubles with them. I believe that this unique project succeeded to prove that it is not true.'⁸⁸

⁸³ Interview with OODC, Ostrava, 03.04.2009.

⁸⁴ Interview with a local authority representative, Ostrava, 02.04.2009.

⁸⁵ Interview with a local authority representative, Ostrava, 02.04.2009.

⁸⁶ Interview with Life Together, 02.04.2009.

⁸⁷ Interview with Life Together, 02.04.2009.

⁸⁸ Interview with a Roma respondent, 03.04.2009.

2.3. Reflections

The case of the Coexistence Village is in many ways unique in the Czech (and Slovak) context and provides inspiration for other initiatives. It is an example of **citizen mobilisation** and of its potential. The **leadership** of the founder and director of the Life Together association was a key to its success, as he was able to inspire and motivate the relevant participants, including high-level decision-makers.

Several different actors were involved: the citizens' association, the church, two levels of local government, the national government and **many domestic and international private donors**.

The importance of the genuine involvement of the target group in the design, implementation and management of the initiative cannot be overstated. In this way the initiative had the necessary **bottom-up character** that allowed beneficiaries to have a **real sense of ownership of the initiative**. This, however, does not mean that such housing projects should rely on private funding: the role of state funding and local authority participation needs to be re-examined.

In contrast to other housing projects where the target group does not participate effectively, pride in their homes is strong among the village inhabitants. An **authentic community** was born, which has unified inhabitants regardless of their ethnic background.

An important dimension and key factor in the success of the project is its **multidimensional approach**, which linked the provision of housing with other support services from the beginning, especially social work and counselling.

The location of the village has both advantages and drawbacks: it is located in the proximity of Liščina, where the affected population had established **social networks**. On the other hand, the location of the Coexistence Village within the city of Ostrava is in a remote segregated area.

The model tested in Ostrava does not tackle the problems of the most vulnerable and destitute groups, as it addresses those that are able to pay the costs related to the provided standard of housing and disposes of the necessary social and cultural capital to constitute a functioning community. However, developing a similar model adapted to the needs of the 'most vulnerable and excluded' would be an important follow-up project for public authorities.

However, the principles at the heart of the examined case, which could be mainstreamed and applied in other similar initiatives, are the focus on **integrating both Roma and non-Roma** and the strong **humanistic idealism**, which characterised the project.

3. Lessons learned

The most important lesson learned through this project is the value of actively involving the target group early in the decision-making at all stages of the project from its design to its implementation.

Another important lesson learned from the example of the Coexistence Village is the need for measures targeting both Roma and non-Roma residents. Even if they are the most vulnerable group, initiatives focusing only on Roma lead to the perpetuation of ethnic segregation and stigmatise their inhabitants.

Municipalities should be encouraged and supported to develop and implement solutions which blend Roma and non-Roma families contributing to bringing an end to the existing segregation and mistrust between ethnic groups.

The example of the Coexistence Village shows the need for a stronger focus on the social dimension of housing and not only on technical aspects. Social housing, which is often defined through cost indicators, requires a sophisticated and comprehensive social policy to fulfil its integration objective. A long-term perspective on working with the target group is crucial in social housing.

The role of the media is very important: focusing on such positive initiatives and especially on the personal cohabitation experiences of Roma and non-Roma families challenges existing anti-Roma prejudice and stereotypes.

Authorities should regularly carry out impact assessments of Roma inclusion policies. Private initiatives, such as the Coexistence Village project should be studied carefully to inform future policy development and reform. In particular, opening up grant procedures could stimulate and support the involvement of a wider spectrum of agents (beyond municipalities) in addressing the housing and social issues surrounding the Roma. In doing so, authorities must also develop mechanisms preventing the residential segregation of Roma.

Annexes

Annex 1 - Tables

Table 1 – Monthly prescriptive housing costs valid for 2009 (in CZK)

In rental housing:

Number of members of household	Population of municipality where housing is located				
	Prague	≥100,000	50,000-99,999	10,000-49,999	≤9,999
1	5,088	4,045	3,804	3,380	3,165
2	7,380	5,952	5,622	5,042	4,747
3	10,140	8,274	7,842	7,083	6,698
≥4	12,737	10,487	9,966	9,051	8,587

In cooperative housing or housing owned by receiver of the allowance:

Number of members of household	Population of municipality where housing is located				
	Prague	≥100.000	50,000-99,999	10,000-49,999	≤9,999
1	3,109	3,109	3,109	3,109	3,109
2	4,719	4,719	4,719	4,719	4,719
3	6,654	6,654	6,654	6,654	6,654
≥4	8,516	8,516	8,516	8,516	8,516

Source: MLSA

Table 2 – Milestones of the Coexistence Village initiative

July 1997	Flood strikes Ostrava
August 1997	Construction site cabins provided to 24 Roma families as substitute housing in Liščina
1998	Life Together formally launches activities in Liščina and starts fundraising for construction of new dwellings
1999	City of Ostrava buys the plot for construction of new housing in Muglinov, planning decision issued
September 1999	Government of the Czech Republic votes co-funding and OODC joins the initiative
September 1999-	Elaboration of the technical documentation of the

March 2000	construction
April 2000- September 2000	Public procurement of the supplier of the construction
November 2000	Launch of the construction works
February 2002	Government of the Czech Republic votes the second grant
August 2002	Completion of the construction works
2007	Termination of the five-year guarantee period of the construction by the supplier

Table 3 – Funding of the construction of the Coexistence Village

Donor	Grant (CZK)
<i>Ministerství pro místní rozvoj ČR</i> [Ministry for Regional Development of the Czech Republic]	25,500,000
<i>Co-operating Netherlands Foundations (CORDAID)</i>	9,328,600
<i>Deutscher Caritasverband e. V.</i>	6,200,000
<i>Statutární město Ostrava</i> [City of Ostrava]	5,447,900
<i>Státní fond životního prostředí</i> [State Environment Fund]	3,110,000
<i>Ministerstvo práce a sociálních věcí ČR</i> [Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the Czech Republic]	3,000,000
<i>Raiffeisenbank</i> (bank loan)	3,000,000
<i>Nadace Divoké husy</i> [Foundation Divoké husy]	2,593,700
<i>Caritas Schweiz</i>	2,000,000
<i>Diecézní charita Brno</i> [Brno Diocese Charity]	1,700,000
<i>Diecézní charita ostravsko-opavská</i> [Ostrava-Opava Diocese Charity]	1,500,000
European Union (<i>Phare - Dživas Jekhetane</i>)	1,500,000
<i>Renovabis</i>	735,000
<i>Ministerstvo vnitra ČR</i> [Interior Ministry of the Czech Republic]	300,000
Mr Petr Vykrut (individual donor)	100,000
<i>Commenda ČR</i>	50,000
<i>Nadace Dagmar a Václava Havlových - VIZE 97</i> [Dagmar and Václav Havel Foundation VIZE 97]	38,600
<i>ORFA, a. s.</i>	15,000

Source: Pavel Obluk (2006) 'Vesnička soužití v Ostravě-Muglinově', in: *Sociální začleňování znevýhodněných skupin obyvatelstva (Sborník příspěvků z mezinárodní konference)*, Ostrava: *Diecézní charita ostravsko-opavská*, p. 5.

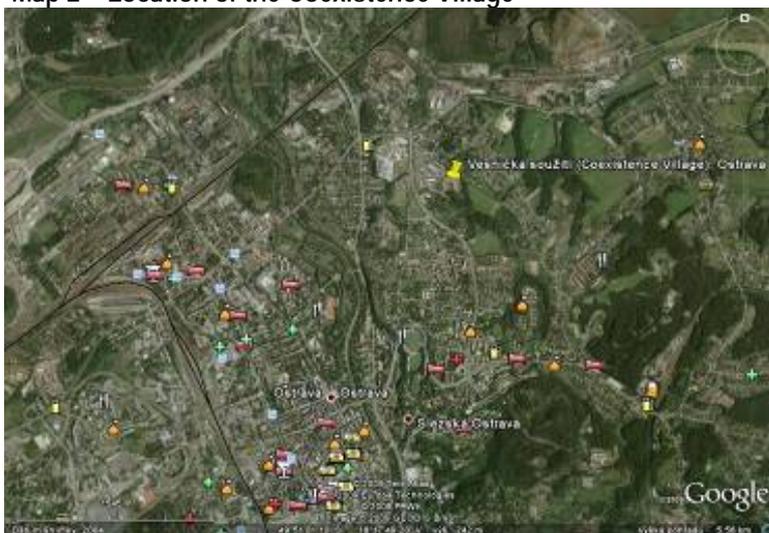
Annex 2 – Maps and photo documentation

Map 1 – Location of Ostrava within the Czech Republic



Source: Google Earth

Map 2 – Location of the Coexistence Village



Source: Google Earth

Map 3 – Coexistence Village



Source: Google Earth

Photo 1 – Coexistence Village: street view



Photo 2 – Coexistence Village: housing and community centre (in the background)



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