

Case study

# Improving Roma housing and eliminating slums, Spain

October 2009

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Luxembourg: Publications office of the European Union, 2010

ISBN: 978-92-9192-574-2

doi:10.2811/65302

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*Design: FRA - Vienna  
Printed in Belgium*

Printed on white chlorine-free paper

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## Introduction

This case study<sup>1</sup> 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 housing conditions of Roma and Travellers in the EU.<sup>2</sup>

The present case study examines two examples of housing programmes intended to improve the housing conditions of Roma slum dwellers. Spain has a long history of housing programmes targeting social exclusion, particularly among the Roma population and has implemented initiatives since the early 1980s aiming to improve the housing situation of this ethnic group. Mistakes occurred during early initiatives,<sup>3</sup> but since the 1980s there has been a shift from projects solely focusing on improving housing to programmes aiming to increase social integration by adopting a holistic approach that takes into account other aspects such as employment, education and health. Both programmes presented in this case study are examples of this new approach.

Spain has implemented various housing programmes to improve the housing conditions of vulnerable groups since the transition to democracy in 1978 with a positive impact on the Roma. However, Roma continue to be overrepresented among the socially disadvantaged and live disproportionately in segregated and substandard slum settlements. These settlements either originated as traditional Roma settlements, which deteriorated over time, or appeared as a consequence of urbanisation, internal migration and population growth. Their existence has been perpetuated by a cycle of exclusion, discrimination and persistent stereotyping which remain obstacles to their full integration into Spanish society.

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<sup>1</sup> This case study, financed and edited by the FRA, was developed by Ms Ostalinda Maya Ovalle and Ms Tatjana Peric on behalf of the European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC), Budapest, and Pavee Point Travellers Centre, Dublin.

<sup>2</sup> Additional information on the housing situation of Roma in Spain gathered within this project can be found in the RAXEN NFP Spain (2009) *Thematic Study on Housing Conditions of Roma and Travellers*, available at: <http://fra.europa.eu>.

<sup>3</sup> An extreme example of this is the relocation of several Roma families by the Madrid municipality in an illegal settlement known as Valdemingómez. The families built houses without permits with the construction material provided by the municipality, on a location next to an illegal pig farm, close to an incinerator and a rubbish dump. According to Professor Dominique Rosenberg, a consultant and rapporteur who visited the site in 1997, 'The living conditions of the population are unacceptable, both from the strictly material, subsistence and sanitation angle and in the light of the minimum housing standards required of a European state'. Since then, this settlement has been dismantled. Council of Europe (1997) *Report on a study visit to Valdemingómez (Madrid) 21-23 April*, available at: [http://www.coe.int/T/DG3/RomaTravellers/documentation/fieldvisits/valdemingomez97\\_en.a.sp](http://www.coe.int/T/DG3/RomaTravellers/documentation/fieldvisits/valdemingomez97_en.a.sp) (28.04.2009).

The first programme is the *Programa de Vivienda de Integración Social* (VIS) [Housing Programme for Social Integration (HPSI)] led by the regional government of the Autonomous Community of Navarra in north-eastern Spain.<sup>4</sup> Under this programme, families living in substandard housing and to a lesser extent families living in slums are moved into property under private ownership. This programme is carried out in cooperation with NGOs that help to identify beneficiaries and follow up their process of adaptation into their new household. It is funded by the Navarra Department of Housing which provides up to 45 per cent of housing costs (depending on the income of the family) and finance the rest through standard bank mortgages. So far 800 families, including 320 Roma families (40 per cent of the beneficiaries), have benefited from the programme.

The second programme located in Madrid is the *Instituto de Realojamiento e Integración Social* (IRIS) [Institute for Re-housing and Social Integration]. Through this programme, the Autonomous Community of Madrid aims to eradicate slums in Madrid by moving dwellers into accommodation rented from the institute that purchases and renovates the houses. The families pay subsidised rent, significantly below market value. According to information provided by a representative of IRIS, nearly 2,000 families (around 5,000 persons) have been moved to standard housing.

Field research was conducted in Navarra between 2 and 5 February 2009 and in Madrid between 5 and 7 July 2009. In Navarra, seven interviews were conducted with representatives of local authorities and civil society actors who participated in the design and implementation of the programme; a further five interviews were carried out with Roma beneficiaries. In Madrid, nine interviews were carried out with staff working on the design, implementation and evaluation of the IRIS. The interviewees were selected according to the different levels of the structure of the Institute (management, social workers, employment advisers, educators and coordinators). No civil society representative was interviewed as the activities are implemented by the Institute without NGO involvement. Five Roma individuals benefiting from the programme were also interviewed.

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<sup>4</sup> Spain is administratively divided into 17 regions or counties commonly known as 'Autonomous Communities' (*Comunidad Autónoma* in Spanish), each with a regional government. These coexist with municipal authorities (*Ayuntamiento* in Spanish).

# 1. Background information

## 1.1. Historical background

Official estimates put the Spanish Roma population (commonly known as *Gitanos*) at around 600,000-650,000 or 1.5 per cent of the total population.<sup>5</sup> Roma living in Spain since the 15<sup>th</sup> century are not recognised either as an ethnic minority or as a national group such as the Basque or Catalanian ‘pueblos’ (peoples). At various points in history they were persecuted, facing collective expulsion, mass arrests and forced assimilation. Under the 1978 Constitution, which marked the reestablishment of democracy in Spain, Roma were recognised as Spanish citizens with equal rights and obligations.

Since then, a number of laws and policies have been adopted aiming to improve their situation. However, despite the positive impact of these policies, a disproportionate number of Roma are still socially excluded. According to the Fundación Secretariado Gitano, Roma are five times more likely to be illiterate than non-Roma, and 84.6 per cent have not reached secondary education.<sup>6</sup> The level of unemployment is only 3 per cent higher than the majority population (13.8 per cent among Roma as opposed to 10.4 per cent among the majority population). However, Roma are overrepresented among those that are hired with a temporary contract (30.9 per cent of the majority population compared to 70.9 per cent among Roma) and among those that work part-time (8.5 per cent of the majority population compared to 42 per cent among Roma).<sup>7</sup> In terms of health, the mortality rate among Roma is 1.4 times higher than the national average and the life expectancy of Roma is 8 to 9 years below the national average.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Report submitted by Spain to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination 2002, available at:

[http://www.unhcr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/898586b1dc7b4043c1256a450044f331/2d89c3e716e67cecc1256de400344d3f/\\$FILE/CERD.C.431.Add.7\\_english\\_.pdf](http://www.unhcr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/898586b1dc7b4043c1256a450044f331/2d89c3e716e67cecc1256de400344d3f/$FILE/CERD.C.431.Add.7_english_.pdf) (31.03.2009).

<sup>6</sup> Fundación Secretariado Gitano (2006) *Poblacion Gitana y Empleo: un Estudio Comparativo* <http://www.gitanos.org/publicaciones/estudioempleo/estudioempleo/conclusiones.pdf> (31.03.2009).

<sup>7</sup> Fundación Secretariado Gitano (2006) *Poblacion Gitana y Empleo: un Estudio Comparativo*, available at:

<http://www.gitanos.org/publicaciones/estudioempleo/estudioempleo/conclusiones.pdf> (31.03.2009).

<sup>8</sup> Spain/Ministry of Health and Consumption (2008) *Salud y Comunidad Gitana*, available at: [http://www.gitanos.org/publicaciones/SaludyCGitana/Salud\\_y\\_comunidad\\_gitana.pdf](http://www.gitanos.org/publicaciones/SaludyCGitana/Salud_y_comunidad_gitana.pdf) (31.03.2009).



In February 2009, the Spanish government joined the Decade of Roma Inclusion,<sup>9</sup> but the relevant National Action Plan for Roma inclusion has not yet been adopted, although in March 2009 the government announced a plan (2009-2012) that will aim to improve Roma education and vocational training.<sup>10</sup>

## 1.2. Housing situation of the Roma

Although article 47 of the Spanish Constitution guarantees the right to adequate housing to all Spanish citizens, including Roma,<sup>11</sup> not all Roma enjoy adequate housing. According to the Fundación Secretariado Gitano report 'Map of Housing and the Spanish Roma Community 2007', 11.7 per cent of the Roma population surveyed (or 10,811 individuals) live in substandard housing.<sup>12</sup> This number includes: very dilapidated housing (6.8 per cent), slum dwellings (*chabolas*) and caves (3.9 per cent), prefabricated or transitional housing (0.5 per cent),<sup>13</sup> mobile housing (0.3 per cent) and dwellings that were not intended as housing (0.2 per cent).<sup>14</sup> According to the same report, 6 per cent of the dwellings surveyed were located in segregated settlements.<sup>15</sup> At the same time, lack of access to adequate housing perpetuates the cycle of exclusion, making it very difficult for families in this situation to gain access to employment and achieve the same standard of health and education as the majority population.

In **Navarra** there are currently between 6,500 and 7,000 Roma, less than 1 per cent of the total population.<sup>16</sup> Research carried out in 1996-1997 for the formulation of the *Plan de Lucha contra la Exclusión Social en Navarra* [Plan for the Fight Against Social Exclusion in Navarra (1998-2005)], in which

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<sup>9</sup> More information about this initiative is available at: <http://www.romadecade.org> (11.11.2009).

<sup>10</sup> 'El Gobierno prepara un plan para ayudar al pueblo gitano' in *La Voz de Galicia Newspaper* (27.03.2009), available at: <http://www.lavozdeg Galicia.es/sociedad/2009/03/27/00031238191685068432971.htm> (31.03.2009).

<sup>11</sup> Spanish Constitution (1978), available at: <http://constitucion.rediris.es/legis/1978/ce1978.html> (31.03.2009).

<sup>12</sup> Published by the Fundación Secretariado Gitano (2007) on the basis of a survey of 91,110 houses inhabited by Roma families. Fundación Secretariado Gitano (2007) *Mapa Sobre Vivienda y Comunidad Gitana en España*, available at: <http://www.gitanos.org/publicaciones/mapavivienda> (31.03.2009).

<sup>13</sup> Transitional housing is housing that was initially intended to be temporary.

<sup>14</sup> The housing situation of Roma in the territory of Spain significantly varies from region to region. The greater percentage of slum dwellings inhabited by Roma is in Galicia (21.9 per cent), followed by Cantabria (14.3 per cent), Madrid (13.8 per cent) and Aragón (11.8 per cent). In the rest of the autonomous communities this percentage is below 10 and in Murcia and La Rioja only 0.1 and 0.6 per cent of Roma live in slum dwellings. Published by the Fundación Secretariado Gitano (2007) *Mapa Sobre Vivienda y Comunidad Gitana en España*, available at: <http://www.gitanos.org/publicaciones/mapavivienda> (31.03.2009).

<sup>15</sup> Segregated settlements were defined as settlements that were within the territory of the municipality but outside the urban nucleus.

<sup>16</sup> Interview with a local authority representative, Navarra, Spain, (02.02.2009).

households that required some form of social assistance were surveyed, found 911 socially excluded Roma households.<sup>17</sup> More recent data is not available. According to information provided by a government official and several NGOs it would seem that there are no slums in Navarra today.

According to a survey carried out in 1997 in **Madrid** by the Consortium for the Relocation of the Marginalised Population (*Consortio para el Realojamiento de la Población Marginada*) of the municipal authority of Madrid (*Ayuntamiento de Madrid*) and the regional government of the Autonomous Community of Madrid (*Comunidad Autónoma de Madrid*), 2,674 families distributed in 62 settlements in Madrid were living in housing that was considered inadequate for their 'social development'.<sup>18</sup> According to officials interviewed, currently only three slum settlements remain in the Madrid region.

### 1.3. Institutional response to the situation

Since the transition to democracy in the 1980s, a number of programmes were created to improve the housing conditions of Roma in Spain, initially relocating Roma families living in slums into 'neighbourhoods of special typology'<sup>19</sup> and 'transition neighbourhoods'<sup>20</sup> with better conditions and services, but in isolated areas, segregated and not served by public transport. Eventually even these new neighbourhoods became slums with deteriorating services and a growing population suffering from high unemployment, high school dropout rates and poor health.<sup>21</sup>

Since the 1990s, housing policies have focused on eliminating segregated Roma slums by integrating Roma into standard housing in non Roma neighbourhoods. These policies also implement programmes addressing other issues such as health, education or employment. A number of programmes supported by Autonomous Communities, municipal authorities and NGOs have tried various forms of integration through the eradication of slums, the provision of socially integrated housing, arranging for rented accommodation, etc. Research indicates that in the last two decades the situation has significantly improved with the

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<sup>17</sup> Department of Social Affairs, Family, Youth and Sports *Plan for the Fight Against Social Exclusion from Navarra (1998-2005)*, available at: [http://www.navarra.es/NR/rdonlyres/550A26C1-81E6-41B4-886D-F43841E4BA24/91946/capitulo\\_1.pdf](http://www.navarra.es/NR/rdonlyres/550A26C1-81E6-41B4-886D-F43841E4BA24/91946/capitulo_1.pdf) (31.03.2009).

<sup>18</sup> Instituto de Realojamiento e Integración Social, *Annual Report 2007*.

<sup>19</sup> *Barrios de Tipología Social* in Spanish.

<sup>20</sup> *Barrios de Transición* in Spanish.

<sup>21</sup> Interview with a local authority representative, Madrid, Spain, 05.02.2009.

percentage of Roma living in substandard housing reduced from 31 per cent to 11.7 per cent.<sup>22</sup>

In 2007, the Housing Ministry developed a proposal to set up a permanent national observatory on Roma housing (*observatorio estable sobre vivienda y población gitana*)<sup>23</sup> to systematically track progress, but it has not been established by the time of writing this report.

The *Plan Nacional de Acción para la Inclusión Social* [Plan for Social Integration 2008-2010]<sup>24</sup> includes a specific section focusing on measures to improve the situation of the Roma population, but none relate to housing.

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<sup>22</sup> Fundación Secretariado Gitano (2007) *Mapa Sobre Vivienda y Comunidad Gitana en España*, available at: <http://www.gitanos.org/publicaciones/mapavivienda> (28.04.09).

<sup>23</sup> Spain/Spanish Ministry of Housing, 'La Ministra de Vivienda firma un convenio con la Fundación Secretariado Gitano para favorecer el acceso a la vivienda de la población gitana' (11.12.2007), available at: [http://www.mviv.es/es/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=972&Itemid=178](http://www.mviv.es/es/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=972&Itemid=178) (28.04.2009).

<sup>24</sup> Spain/Ministry of Education, Social Affairs and Sports (2008) *Plan of National Action for Social Inclusion of the Kingdom of Spain*, available at: <http://www.feafes.com/NR/rdonlyres/6F676765-D6F2-499F-ABDC-1029403D6A09/24168/PlanNacAccionInclusinsocial20082011.pdf> (31.03.2009).

## 2. Location 1: Navarra

### 2.1. Project description

The **initiative entitled** *Programa de Vivienda de Integración Social* (VIS) [Housing Programme for Social Integration (HPSI)] is implemented by the regional government of the Autonomous Community of Navarra through the *Departamento de Vivienda y Ordenación del Territorio* [Department of Environment, Territorial Management and Housing]<sup>25</sup> and the *Departamento de Asuntos Sociales, Familia, Juventud y Deportes* [Department of Social, Family and Youth Affairs and Sports].<sup>26</sup>

The HPSI programme is a **regional government initiative** created to help implement the Plan for the Fight Against Social Exclusion for Navarra (1998-2005). In this plan, housing was identified as one of the key areas to address social exclusion together with fighting extreme poverty, unemployment and promoting access to health care and education.<sup>27</sup> According to the officials interviewed, the programme targets families living in ‘substandard conditions’. The HPSI programme can be seen as a follow up to earlier steps taken by the regional government to remove Roma families from slums. Although the level of spatial segregation in Navarra is much lower than in other parts of Spain, a recent report estimates that 7.4 per cent of the Roma population in the region continue to live segregated, while nearly half live in city centres, mainly in the capital, Pamplona and to a lesser extent in other towns in old houses.<sup>28</sup>

The ultimate **objective** of the programme is to ‘contribute to make Article 47 of the Spanish Constitution a reality in Navarra related to the right of all Spanish citizens to enjoy a dignified and adequate housing situation’.<sup>29</sup> In order to achieve this, the programme aims to re-house those whose socio-economic situation does not permit access to housing of adequate standards in ‘dignified and adequate housing’. Beneficiaries are those living in substandard or ghetto-like housing conditions within the region of Navarra. So far, approximately 40

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<sup>25</sup> Hereafter: Department of Housing.

<sup>26</sup> Hereafter: Department of Social Affairs.

<sup>27</sup> Department of Social Affairs, Family, Youth and Sports, *Plan for the Fight Against Social Exclusion from Navarra (1998-2005)*, available at: [http://www.navarra.es/NR/rdonlyres/550A26C1-81E6-41B4-886D-F43841E4BA24/91946/capitulo\\_1.pdf](http://www.navarra.es/NR/rdonlyres/550A26C1-81E6-41B4-886D-F43841E4BA24/91946/capitulo_1.pdf) (31.03.2009).

<sup>28</sup> Fundación Secretariado Gitano (2007) *Mapa Sobre Vivienda y Comunidad Gitana en España*, available at: <http://www.gitanos.org/publicaciones/mapavivienda> (28.04.09).

<sup>29</sup> Navarran Institute of Social Affairs and the Department of Housing (2001) *Programa de Vivienda de Integración Social*.

per cent of the beneficiaries belong to the Roma ethnic group.<sup>30</sup> According to an official, the programme was designed to provide housing to socially excluded persons that were not included in other social housing programmes, such as the Social Protection Housing Programme.

The **time frame** of the programme spans eleven years. It was initiated in 1998 and continues until today. The **total budget** expenditure since 1998 has reached 248,373,488 EUR.

**Funding** is provided by the government of Navarra through its Department of Environment, Territorial Management and Housing and the General Directorate of Social Affairs.<sup>31</sup>

The programme is implemented through the following five steps:

The **first step**, involving the selection of eligible families, is accomplished with the support of NGOs. The Fundación Secretariado Gitano pointed out: ‘Generally our social workers know and have been working with a family for some time, ranging from a few months to several years, before they are selected for the programme.’<sup>32</sup> NGOs that have worked with families can make a pre-assessment of their situation and help them put together the documentation to apply for the programme, e.g. copies of personal documents, a social report<sup>33</sup> and a formal written agreement of incorporation into the programme, which includes certain obligations, for example attending relevant employment trainings, sending children to school and looking after their health.

The **second step** involves the Department of Social Affairs, which checks<sup>34</sup> that legal requirements are fulfilled: applicants must be registered in Navarra for at least 3 years prior to their application and their income must be below 1.7 times the National Indicator of Earnings.<sup>35</sup>

In the **third step**, if the application is approved, the family and the relevant NGO, if involved, must find a property that fulfils the requirements specified in Article 43 of the Act 287/1998 (28.09.1998): the property should not be older than 15 years or exceed 120 m<sup>2</sup> (the grant covers 90 m<sup>2</sup>); it should have a certificate that demonstrates that it is adequate for habitation,<sup>36</sup> and its price

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<sup>30</sup> Out of 800 beneficiary families, 320 were Roma. Interview with a local authority representative, Pamplona, Spain, 02.02.09.

<sup>31</sup> For more information about the budget of this programme please see Annex 1.

<sup>32</sup> Interview with Fundación Secretariado Gitano, Pamplona, Spain, 02.02.2009.

<sup>33</sup> The ‘social report’ includes basic information about each member of the family (e.g. name, date of birth, address, etc.) and information on where the family comes from, their economic and employment situation, any problems with the justice system, any health issues, etc.

<sup>34</sup> Article 43 of Spain/Act 287/1998 (28.09.1998) *Ley Foral [Law for...]*.

<sup>35</sup> *Indicador Público de Renta de Efectos Múltiples*, according to Spain/Act/ 1/2008 (18.01.2008) set at at 516.90 EUR per month for 2008.

<sup>36</sup> Known in Spanish as *Cédula de habitabilidad*.

should not exceed the limit set by the national government.<sup>37</sup> Once the property has been located the family will have to arrange a mortgage, possibly assisted by NGOs. The relevant documentation is then sent to the Navarra Department of Housing.

In the **fourth step**, the Department of Housing checks that the property fulfils the criteria specified above and, if satisfied, approves the grant. Mortgage payments are the responsibility of the grant recipient.

In the **fifth step**, the family signs a contract for the purchase of the property and the Department of Social Affairs provides funding for NGOs to continue supporting the family for a period of up to three years. In some cases, NGOs may continue to do follow up work without additional funding, if necessary.

## 2.2. Main elements

The programme is a **co-operative** effort of the Department of Social Affairs<sup>38</sup> and the Department of Housing<sup>39</sup> of the regional government of the Autonomous Community of Navarra with NGOs.<sup>40</sup> Both NGO and government respondents agree that the collaboration between them, as well as between government departments was very good. As Navarra is a relatively small region, government officials and civil society actors know each other, which facilitates communication.

A key **innovative element** of this programme is the participation of the private sector, as the mortgages provided by banks constitute a significant part of the funds necessary to buy the property. This reduces the amount of funding required from the government to invest in the programme, while increasing the number of houses that can be purchased, thereby making this housing initiative relatively inexpensive. Furthermore, this allows beneficiaries to be responsible for the repayment themselves. This has proved so successful that so far no house has been repossessed by the banks.<sup>41</sup> However, some respondents fear

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<sup>37</sup> In 2008, 1,155 EUR per m<sup>2</sup>. Interview with a local authority representative, Pamplona, Spain, 02.02.2009.

<sup>38</sup> The Department of Social Affairs ensures that applicants fulfil the social criteria and finances the costs of NGO involvement in the project (time and transport costs) and the expenditure related to the purchase of the property.

<sup>39</sup> The Department of Housing ensures that the economic criteria with regard to the applicant and the property are met.

<sup>40</sup> The NGOs that are currently working in the programme are: Fundación Secretariado Gitano, Roma Association La Majarí, Cáritas Diocesana de Pamplona y Tudela, Fundación Santa Lucía and the Anafe Association. All of these are located in the Navarra region and work regionally. Of these, the first two organisations work exclusively with Roma, the third one works mainly with Roma and the remaining work with the immigrant population.

<sup>41</sup> Interview with a local authority representative, Pamplona, Spain, 02.02.09.

that ‘the current economic crisis and the fluctuation of mortgage interest rates are likely to lead to the repossession of some houses by banks soon.’<sup>42</sup>

The programme has a **holistic approach**: NGOs help the families find work, ensure that children attend school and make sure that families make use of the social services and social aid they are entitled to. Families are in fact required to commit themselves to adhering to various social inclusion measures before their application is approved, e.g. school attendance, health monitoring, participation in vocational training, etc. According to NGO representatives finding employment for Roma beneficiaries was difficult, due to their lack or low level of formal qualifications, but the other programme actions were successfully implemented.

Forty per cent of the beneficiaries of this programme are Roma: ‘They are overrepresented among the socially excluded, but no priority is given to a particular ethnic group.’<sup>43</sup> Although the programme addresses mainly persons over 25, exceptions are made regarding Roma who tend to marry early. Some opposition was noted, as, according to civil society representatives interviewed, in one case, the mayor of a town tried to stop a Roma beneficiary family from moving there. Despite the intervention of the Fundación Secretariado Gitano and the Department of Social Affairs, opposition by local residents forced the Roma family to move to another town.

**Roma were not involved directly in the design or implementation** of the programme, although some of the staff of an NGO working on implementation are Roma. The programme was **evaluated independently** and NGOs as well as five beneficiary families provided feedback,<sup>44</sup> but no information regarding their ethnic background is provided.

There is no direct **interaction between Roma beneficiaries and local authorities**. The only flow of information between these two groups is through the NGOs that relay information on the concerns and difficulties of the families to government officials of the Department of Social Affairs. Interaction between authorities and Roma representative organisations is limited to the Roma Association La Majarí.

The programme targets ‘those in vulnerable positions’ without specific focus on particularly vulnerable groups, such as **women, children, older persons or persons with disabilities**. It is questionable whether banks would approve

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<sup>42</sup> Interview with Fundación Secretariado Gitano, Pamplona, Spain, 02.02.2009.

<sup>43</sup> Interview with a local authority representative, Pamplona, Spain, 02.02.09.

<sup>44</sup> Spain/Department of Social Affairs (2005) *Evaluación del Plan de Lucha contra la Exclusión Social en Navarra (1998-2005)*, available at: [http://www.navarra.es/home\\_es/Gobierno+de+Navarra/Organigrama/Los+departamentos/Asuntos+Sociales+Familia+Juventud+y+Deporte/Publicaciones/Publicaciones+propias/Asuntos+Sociales/Eclusion+Social.htm](http://www.navarra.es/home_es/Gobierno+de+Navarra/Organigrama/Los+departamentos/Asuntos+Sociales+Familia+Juventud+y+Deporte/Publicaciones/Publicaciones+propias/Asuntos+Sociales/Eclusion+Social.htm) (11.11.2009).

mortgages for such persons. In this way though, as a respondent noted, ‘the programme might be leaving out those that need it the most.’<sup>45</sup>

The main **problem** in the implementation of the programme, as identified by respondents, is the lengthy administrative application process lasting two to three months: as a respondent commented, in some cases ‘a good house has been lost because the deal fell through as a result of a delay in the process of obtaining approval’. Another problem is the scarcity of properties that fulfil the different criteria such as price, size and location, particularly in the main cities. This is further exacerbated by rising property prices. For the programme, this has meant that families had to relocate from areas in which they lived all their lives to other affordable areas, which are typically more rural and isolated. This limits the possibilities of finding work and makes it difficult to keep in touch with relatives.<sup>46</sup> The current **economic crisis** has led banks to restrict mortgages making it difficult for the programme to continue. As an indication the number of houses bought through the programme dropped dramatically from an average of 80 per year from 1998 to 2007 to only 19 in 2008.<sup>47</sup>

A key **innovative element** of this programme has been its emphasis on desegregation achieved by dispersing socially excluded families or persons in different areas, as far as possible: ‘Moving many families with problems to one area might eventually lead to a neighbourhood becoming a ghetto.’<sup>48</sup> However, this is not easy for everyone: ‘I am tremendously stressed about the prospect of moving to a town a few kilometres away from where I grew up.’<sup>49</sup>

The **formal assessment** of the programme has had little input from Roma beneficiaries or NGO partners.<sup>50</sup> A survey of a random sample of beneficiaries, including Roma, could provide policy makers with important evidence regarding the impact of the programme and lessons learned.

One of the strengths of the programme has been its **sustainability, as it has been operating** for ten years as a result of the clear political commitment of the government of Navarra. However, the current economic crisis could put the programme at risk.

There was general consensus among all respondents that this programme, if properly adapted to local conditions, has a potential for transferability and could

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<sup>45</sup> Interview with Fundación Secretariado Gitano, Pamplona, Spain, 02.02.2009.

<sup>46</sup> Interview with Fundación Secretariado Gitano, Pamplona, Spain, 02.02.2009.

<sup>47</sup> Please see Annex 1.

<sup>48</sup> Interview with Fundación Secretariado Gitano, Pamplona, Spain, 01.02.2009

<sup>49</sup> Interview with a Roma woman, 02.02.2009.

<sup>50</sup> Spain/Department of Social Affairs (2005) *Evaluación del Plan de Lucha contra la Exclusión Social en Navarra (1998-2005)*, available at: [http://www.navarra.es/home\\_es/Gobierno+de+Navarra/Organigrama/Los+departamentos/Asuntos+Sociales+Familia+Juventud+y+Deporte/Publicaciones/Publicaciones+propias/Asuntos+Sociales/Eclusion+Social.htm](http://www.navarra.es/home_es/Gobierno+de+Navarra/Organigrama/Los+departamentos/Asuntos+Sociales+Familia+Juventud+y+Deporte/Publicaciones/Publicaciones+propias/Asuntos+Sociales/Eclusion+Social.htm) (28.04.2009).



be **replicated** elsewhere. As one of the key elements of the programme that made it so successful was the high number of relocations achieved in relation to public investment, it could be suitable for countries that cannot afford large scale public spending for housing and social inclusion projects.

Respondents also pointed to various **key lessons learned** after ten years of implementation. Government officials highlighted the effectiveness of the legal framework that clearly set the terms of cooperation between the different actors involved to ensure that the roles and obligations are clear.<sup>51</sup> Civil society actors highlighted the importance of providing continuous support to the beneficiary families to allow them to adapt to their new situation. The need for flexible and adaptable policies has been made clear in the current move towards using rented property in the new programme mentioned above in view of the current economic situation.

## 2.3. Reflections

One of the most important positive aspects of the HPSI is that it allows homeownership (of good quality housing) for a Roma family, which affords a significant positive social effect in an area where 90 per cent of the population own their homes. This improves social status and provides a strong incentive to search for employment, as well as for training opportunities to develop marketable skills. It can also improve self esteem and foster social inclusion.

However, to improve the programme, it would be useful to include an effective mechanism to facilitate feedback from beneficiaries, which currently relies on the informal, but regular, communication between beneficiary families and NGOs, as well as between NGOs and government officials.

Finally, one should note that this programme does not provide a solution for those living in extreme poverty who cannot satisfy mortgage repayment criteria. It is these who are invariably the most vulnerable and for whom an alternative solution could be sought.

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<sup>51</sup> This seems to be confirmed by the evaluation of the programme, according to which the only coordinated response of governmental departments within the Plan to Fight Social Exclusion took place in the context of the HPSI between the Department of Housing and the Department of Social Affairs. Spain/Department of Social Affairs (2005) *Evaluación del Plan de Lucha contra la Exclusión Social en Navarra (1998-2005)*, available at: [http://www.navarra.es/home\\_es/Gobierno+de+Navarra/Organigrama/Los+departamentos/Asuntos+ Sociales+Familia+Juventud+y+Deporte/Publicaciones/Publicaciones+propias/Asuntos+ Sociales/Eclusion+Social.htm](http://www.navarra.es/home_es/Gobierno+de+Navarra/Organigrama/Los+departamentos/Asuntos+ Sociales+Familia+Juventud+y+Deporte/Publicaciones/Publicaciones+propias/Asuntos+ Sociales/Eclusion+Social.htm) (28.04.09).

## 3. Location 2: Madrid

### 3.1. Project description

The *Instituto de Realojamiento e Integración Social* (IRIS)<sup>52</sup> [Institute for Re-housing and Social Integration] of the regional government of the Autonomous Community of Madrid was set up in the context of the Programme for the Re-housing of Marginalised Population of Madrid to address the problem of slums. This programme initially ran from 1986 until 1998. Its first task was to conduct a survey of all the families living in slums in the city of Madrid and re-house them. The result of the survey showed that in 1997, the housing of 2,674 families in 62 settlements in Madrid was considered inadequate for their ‘social development’.<sup>53</sup> These families were then moved from the slums to newly-created neighbourhoods (*barríos de tipología especial*), provisional settlements and flats within blocks of buildings.<sup>54</sup> Although these settlements were considered an improvement over the previous settlements from which Roma were relocated, they remained segregated with limited access to public transportation, school or health care.

IRIS has been operating in Madrid since 1998. Its **target group** are people living in slums that meet the following criteria: they must own no property in Spain; earn less than 3.5 per cent of the IPREM;<sup>55</sup> be over 25 or with children; have not been awarded any public property; and have been residents of Madrid for at least two years (although there is flexibility in this).<sup>56</sup> These criteria do not give priority to any particular ethnic group. However, our respondents indicated the overwhelming majority of slum dwellers in Madrid are ethnic Roma.

The **total budget** of IRIS for the period 1999-2008 was 217,472,905 EUR, of which 174,666,164 EUR was allocated for the purchase of 1,401 houses to be rented to the beneficiaries of the programme.<sup>57</sup> The sole **source of funding** is the government of Madrid.

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<sup>52</sup> More information available at:  
[http://www.madrid.org/cs/Satellite?c=CM\\_Agrupador\\_FP&cid=1142354300828&idConsejeria=1142354300828&idListConsj=1109265444710&idOrganismo=1109266227591&language=es&pagename=ComunidadMadrid%2FEstructura&pid=1109265444699](http://www.madrid.org/cs/Satellite?c=CM_Agrupador_FP&cid=1142354300828&idConsejeria=1142354300828&idListConsj=1109265444710&idOrganismo=1109266227591&language=es&pagename=ComunidadMadrid%2FEstructura&pid=1109265444699) (11.11.2009).

<sup>53</sup> Institute for Re-housing and Social Integration, *Annual Report 2007*.

<sup>54</sup> Institute for Re-housing and Social Integration, *Annual Report 2006*.

<sup>55</sup> The *Indicador Público de Renta de Efectos Múltiples* in Spanish, which in 2008 was set by the Spain/Act/ 1/2008 (18.01.2008) at 516.90 EUR per month.

<sup>56</sup> Interview with a local authority representative, Madrid, Spain, 05.02.2009.

<sup>57</sup> No information found for 1998.

The main **objectives** of IRIS are to provide adequate housing to slum dwellers, to facilitate the social integration of families inhabiting slum dwellings or inadequate housing, to help municipal authorities to eradicate slum settlements, to contribute to the social integration of slum dwellers, to achieve a balanced territorial distribution of the beneficiaries of the programme and to facilitate co-ordination with different social partners and avoid fraudulent abuse of the housing schemes.

In its 2007 Annual Report, the IRIS distinguished seven **main activities** used to achieve these objectives:

**Documenting the current situation and evolution of slum dwellings:** The IRIS Social Team visits the families and provides social services, and the IRIS Inspection Team documents technical aspects of the slum, such as its location and basic data about its inhabitants.

**Paying attention to the families before their relocation:** Social workers, educators and teachers visit the families regularly and connect them to the social services to ensure that these families are not isolated. They also prepare the relevant documentation so that the families can gain access to rented housing through the programme.<sup>58</sup> The relocation is the result of formal collaboration between IRIS and the municipal authorities, which is responsible for evictions and dismantling slum dwellings.

**Finding and preparing alternative housing for slum dwellers:** Most of the houses are flats renovated by IRIS, while a smaller percentage is accommodation provided by the Ministry of Housing.

**Matching properties to families:** On the basis of the number of family members, the size of the flat and the proximity to their place of employment, the social workers assign houses to families, ensuring that they are relocated in different areas to avoid segregation. The assigned flat includes a rental contract that has a number of 'social clauses.'<sup>59</sup>

**Re-housing the family and demolishing the slum dwelling:** After the contract is signed, a moving date is set, on which the slum dwelling is destroyed. The team of social workers working with the family in the slum passes the 'social report' to the corresponding social services, including the Centre of Community Promotion, of the area to which the family relocates. The centre appoints a social worker as a contact point for the family, responsible for establishing them in their new flat and introducing them to neighbours.

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<sup>58</sup> In relation to the Cañaveral slum settlement which was recently dismantled, one interviewee explained that they have been 'working with some of the families for the past 20 years.' Interview with a local authority representative, Madrid, 06.02.2009.

<sup>59</sup> The examples are such compromises as to send the children to school and participate in trainings to improve access to employment.

**Accompanying the families in their social integration:** The IRIS has set up eight Community Promotion Centres and one Transitional Social Work Unit to cover the Madrid area, to periodically visit families, to provide mediation in case of conflict between the family and neighbours and to implement projects to further social integration. They also facilitate contact amongst beneficiaries of the programme with similar needs and issues.<sup>60</sup>

**Controlling the rightful occupation of properties:** The Institute has a specific department that systematically checks that the flats are occupied by the family to whom it was rented, so as to avoid any fraud.

## 3.2. Main elements

The programme works through the Institute's partnerships and the relevant municipal authorities through **co-operation** agreements.

An **innovative** element of this approach is the concentration of all procedures for housing action in one organisation that has the necessary experience, budget and technical knowledge to relocate slums dwellers, efficiently avoiding administrative delays, often characteristic of other housing programmes, where various actors, e.g. different government departments, NGOs, etc, intervene at different stages.

A **creative element** of the programme is the idea of facilitating communication among programme beneficiaries living in the same area, who may provide help and support to each other when facing similar difficulties. This simple action aids the integration of the family into their new neighbourhood.

This programme employs a **multifaceted approach to housing** through the Centres that offer a variety of resources to participating families in the areas to which they have been relocated, for example: assistance in finding work.<sup>61</sup>

There is no evidence of any direct **involvement of Roma or other beneficiaries in the design, implementation and assessment of the programme**, other than the feedback provided informally, but regularly through social workers and educators.

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<sup>60</sup> According to the statement of Ms Anabel Mariño, head of Urbanism and Housing of Madrid Townhall (*delegada de Urbanismo y Vivienda en el Ayuntamiento de Madrid*) '96 per cent of the families re-housed through the IRIS programme have successfully adapted [to their new housing situation]'. See 'El poblado chabolista de El Cañaveral, a punto de desaparecer tras 21 años de miseria y pobreza' (2009) in: *Madridpress.com*, available at: <http://www.madridpress.com/noticia.asp?ref=86601> (28.04.09).

<sup>61</sup> See Annex 2, Map 5.

There is no direct **interaction between Roma and the local authorities**.<sup>62</sup> However, there is a flow of information through the educators and IRIS social workers. Although not ideal, the effects of the lack of interaction between the programme beneficiaries and those implementing it is mitigated because the social workers and educators at the Institute are responsible for designing the programmes on the basis of their experience and their daily interaction with the beneficiaries.

There is no **specific focus on Roma women, children, older persons or persons with disabilities**, but there is an awareness of the importance of working with Roma women to ensure successful relocations. According to a local authority official, extensive work is carried out with Roma women 'due to their important role within the family'.<sup>63</sup>

One of the main **difficulties** is to ensure that rent is paid regularly. The average rent of a flat in the programme is between 60-120 EUR, which is significantly below market prices. Roma beneficiaries who were interviewed also stated that even this amount was a considerable challenge, as families who did not pay any bills in the slum found it difficult to pay rent and other bills every month, particularly those families with a low level of income.<sup>64</sup> Until recently, families unable to pay rent would not face any consequences, but according to one of the officials interviewed, IRIS recently decided to take legal action against families owing over 1,500 EUR.

Other **difficulties** encountered by Roma concern social contact: 'Living far away from my extended family has made it quite difficult for my children to adapt. Despite the fact that they are doing well at school, my children are not making any friends whom they can play with in the afternoons [...] They used to spend time with their cousins and uncles'.<sup>65</sup>

The programme's exclusion criterion regarding property ownership can also create **difficulties** for families who have moved to Madrid, while owning property in another part of Spain, but are reluctant to move back due to the lack of employment opportunities. According to IRIS officials, families in such a situation tend to move in with relatives, often in overcrowded conditions,

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<sup>62</sup> The programme employs 129 staff members. However, according to an official interviewed, only one of them is Roma and the possibility of employing Roma beneficiaries is out of question as the general level of qualifications of the beneficiaries of this programme is very low and the IRIS can only employ those that have passed qualifying examinations to work for the government. Interview with a local authority representative, Madrid, Spain, 05.02.2009.

<sup>63</sup> Interview with a local authority representative, Madrid, Spain, 05.02.2009. Another representative further explains that 'Roma women often take the lead in dealing with the new administrative issues related to the household and this gives them a stronger position within the family'. Interview with a local authority representative, Madrid, Spain, 05.02.2009.

<sup>64</sup> Interviews with Roma respondents, 02.05.2009.

<sup>65</sup> Interviews with Roma respondents, 02.05.2009.

usually in another slum perpetuating the situation and possibly jeopardising the aim of the programme to completely eradicate slums in Madrid by 2011.

Respondents were largely positive about the programme: ‘Moving has really changed our lives for the better.’<sup>66</sup> However, some had a limited understanding of its scope or details about its operation. IRIS publishes detailed **evaluations** of its work in the form of annual reports, but without input from beneficiaries or other external actors. Thus an **independent formal assessment** is lacking.

Although officials interviewed could not cite any examples of the programme being **mainstreamed** into housing policies, one should note that in the Housing Strategy for Social Integration (2007-2011) of the Madrid government there is a commitment to eradicate slums by 2011 and IRIS is tasked with this.<sup>67</sup>

Concerning **sustainability**, an IRIS representative told us: ‘Excellent results of the programme so far have led to the institute earning the support of the main political parties, which ensures the continuation of the programme.’ This is evident in the increase of the budget for the next three years. The IRIS has been allotted a budget of 109,780,000 EUR for the relocation of Roma families from the slum settlements of Las Mimbrenas, Santa Catalina, El Ventorro and El Cañaveral by 2011.<sup>68</sup> This last settlement has already been dismantled at a cost of 17,300,000 EUR.<sup>69</sup>

According to a press release of the regional government of the Autonomous Community of Madrid, interest in the IRIS model has been expressed by several EU Member States (including Hungary and the Czech Republic) and other regional governments (such as Medellín, Lisbon, Palma de Mallorca and Andalucía).<sup>70</sup> However, the potential for **transferability** could be limited by the fact that it requires significant financial and human resources.

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<sup>66</sup> Interview with a Roma respondent, 05.02.2009.

<sup>67</sup> Spain/Gobierno de la Ciudad de Madrid (2008) *Acción Estratégica de Vivienda para la Integración Social*, available at: <http://www.munimadrid.es/UnidadWeb/Contenidos/Publicaciones/TemaUrbanismo/AccionEstrategicaVivienda/INDICEPRESENTACION.pdf> (28.04.2009).

<sup>68</sup> These are the last four slum settlements in Madrid. Please see Annex 2, Map 4.

<sup>69</sup> ‘El poblado chabolista de El Cañaveral, a punto de desaparecer tras 21 años de miseria y pobreza’ (2009) in: *Madridpress.com*, available at: <http://www.madridpress.com/noticia.asp?ref=86601> (28.04.09).

<sup>70</sup> ‘La Comunidad creará un Centro de Arte Caló para el Pueblo Gitano en el distrito de Puente de Vallecas’ *Comunidad de Madrid Press Reselase* (14.04.2009), available at: [http://www.madrid.org/lapresidencia/descargas/090414\\_CENTRO\\_PUEBLO\\_GITANO.pdf](http://www.madrid.org/lapresidencia/descargas/090414_CENTRO_PUEBLO_GITANO.pdf) (28.04.2009).

### 3.3. Reflections

Over the years the IRIS programme has contributed to the successful eradication of slums not only by providing non-segregated housing, but also through its efforts to reduce unemployment among its beneficiaries, which is essential for social integration and, of course, for paying rent and bills. The training and guidance arranged for the families before and after the move is another important aspect, crucial to their successful adaptation to new conditions of life.

IRIS will be under increasing pressure by the policy to eradicate slum dwellings in Madrid by 2011. Given that families that do not meet the conditions of the programme cannot be provided with housing accommodation, although their slum home will be dismantled, more flexible conditions could be developed.

The impact of the economic crisis on this programme cannot yet be known. Interviews with IRIS staff revealed that in the past the institute has faced problems in obtaining the monthly rent payment from the beneficiaries. Recently they have adopted a new policy which involves starting legal procedures in cases of non-payment. It is unclear whether this policy will decrease the number of beneficiaries failing to pay their monthly rent or if the economic crisis and increasing levels of unemployment will result in a greater number of families being unable to manage their monthly bills.

## 4. Lessons learned

A Roma woman described her new home to us as a ‘pleasant place in which you feel like spending time.’ A Roma man said it had affected his family life: ‘Before moving I would never want to spend any time at home, I would always be out. Now I spend all the time I’m not working with my wife and children in my flat.’<sup>71</sup>

Clearly relocating to good quality and non-segregated accommodation will have a strong positive impact on people’s lives. In this context such programmes contribute significantly to reducing social inequalities and promoting social cohesion.

In both cases social workers and mediators interviewed stressed the importance of carrying out **follow up work** not only with the family, but also with non-Roma neighbours, as they also have to adapt to the new situation. Although ‘discrimination’ or ‘stereotypes’ against Roma were not mentioned, this initiative indicates that such stereotypes might be held by some of the new neighbours which must be addressed to ensure mutual acceptance.

Neither of the two programmes included **Roma participation** in the design, implementation and assessment. Although feedback is provided from staff working directly with the beneficiaries, developing a mechanism to engage the Roma more actively in all stages of the project could be a positive step forward. It should be noted in this regard that IRIS action programmes are developed by staff working directly with Roma families on a daily basis. Furthermore, although the general framework is created on the basis of guidelines provided by the IRIS, it is adapted by each centre to fit the particular local situation thus ensuring that it is relevant for the beneficiaries.

In general the research revealed a relative **lack of communication** between the lead organisations working on social inclusion housing programmes. IRIS respondents indicated their interest in learning how the HPSI programme had managed to avoid the issue of non-payment of the monthly rent. The staff of the HPSI programme on the other hand could benefit from exchanging experiences with IRIS, as they plan to start a programme with rented accommodation, on which IRIS has 11 years of experience. Respondents were also largely unaware of similar initiatives across the EU and expressed interest in learning more.

Finally, the research showed that success in both cases depends also on the **strong commitment of all those involved** to overcome difficulties.

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<sup>71</sup> Interviews with Roma respondents, 05.02.2009.



## Annex 1: Statistical data and tables

**Table 1 – Budget per year of the Navarra Housing Programme for Social Integration and number of houses purchased**

Year	Number of houses acquired	Funding provided by the Department of Housing	Funding provided by the Department of Social Affairs
1998	53	634.150	172.850
1999	99	1.103.693	304.502
2000	103	1.504.268	447.361
2001	96	1.385.520	494.595
2002	98	1.602.070	584.508
2003	87	1.566.450	576.132
2004	74	1.324.205	548.927
2005	69	1.208.241	520.856
2006	77	1.241.058	519.252
2007	47	1299.323	362.333
2008	19	509.038	155.652
<b>Total</b>	<b>822</b>	<b>13.378.016</b>	<b>4.102.041</b>

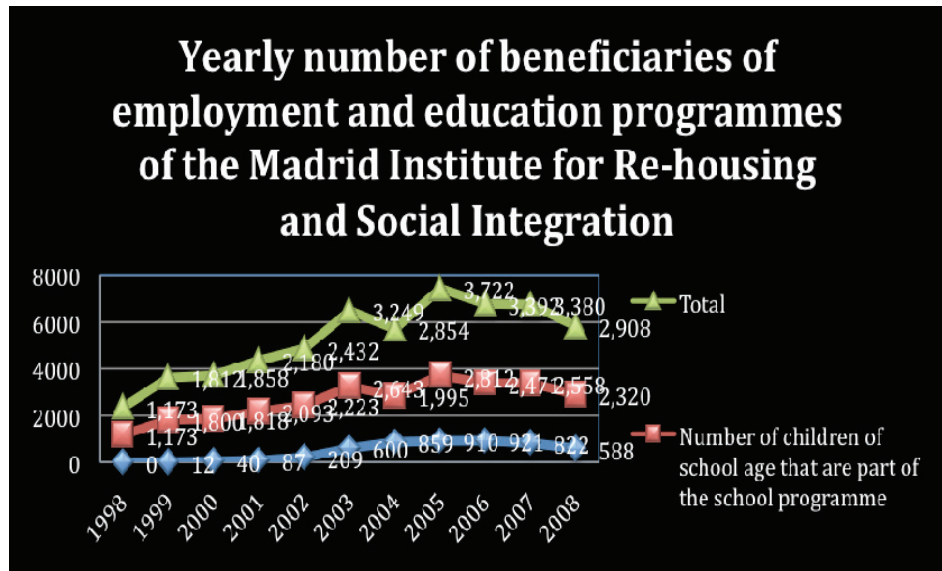
*Source: Navarran Department of Social Affairs and the Department of Housing.*

**Table 2 – Budget per year of the Madrid Institute for Re-housing and Social Integration**

Year	Annual budget in EUR	Amount spent on the purchase of households	Number of households purchased
1999	2.265.800	15.740.507.01	236
2000	16.189.460	17.898.140.47	240
2001	16.588.535	9.482.892.10	106
2002	18.471.507	11.077.432.87	101
2003	24.153.510	20.375.946.47	142
2004	24.986.633	16.084.732.62	94
2005	26.501.421	18.651.930.01	100
2006	29.127.598	26.197.280.37	118
2007	30.155.527	25.568.353	115
2008	29.032.914	13.588.952.33	56
<b>Total</b>	<b>216.800.000</b>	<b>174.666.164</b>	<b>1401</b>

*Source: Madrid Institute for Re-housing and Social Integration*

**Table 3 – Annual number of beneficiaries of employment and education programmes of the Madrid Institute for Re-housing and Social Integration**



*Source: Madrid Institute for Re-housing and Social Integration*

## Annex 2: Maps and photo documentation

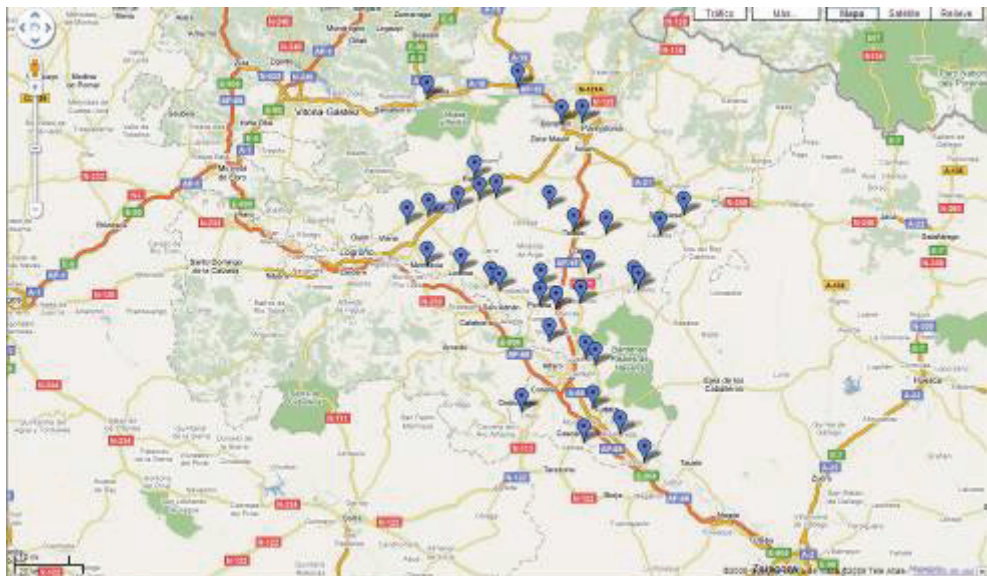
Map 1 – Map of Spain indicating the location of Navarra



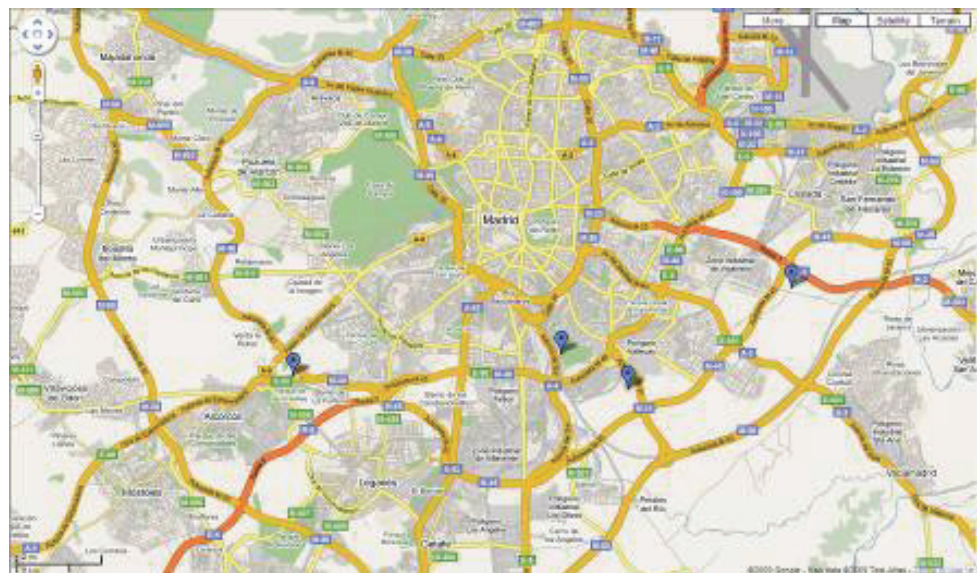
Map 2 – Map of Spain indicating the location of Madrid



**Map 3 – The areas in Navarra where the Fundación Secretariado Gitano has facilitated the purchase of houses**

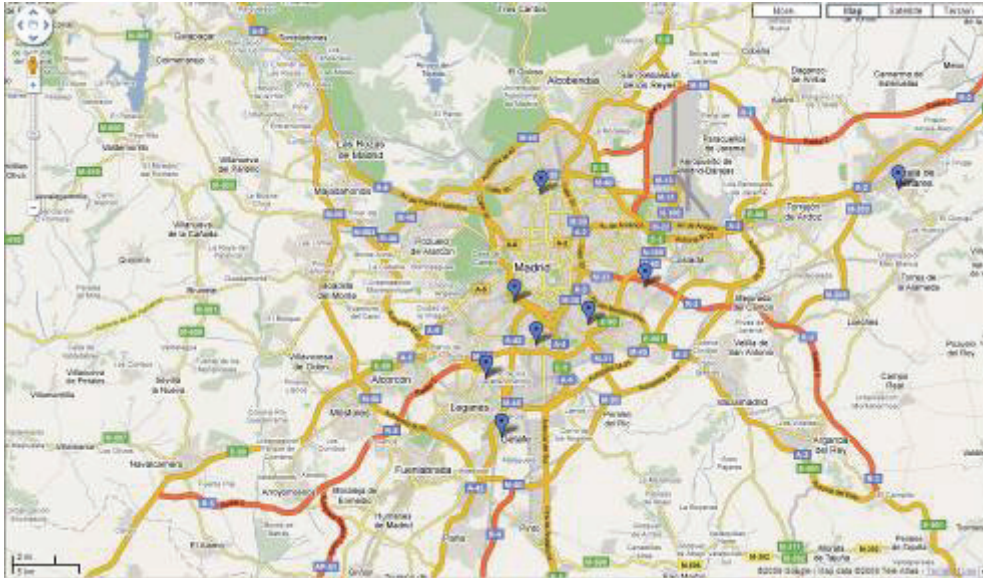


**Map 4 - The four remaining slum settlements in Madrid**





**Map 5 – The nine centres of the Madrid Institute for Re-housing and Social Integration which indicate the areas where families are moved**



**Photo 1 – A house in Tudela (Navarra) acquired through the Housing Programme for Social Integration**



**Photo 2 – Interior view of the same house**



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European Commission

European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights

**Case study**

**Improving Roma housing and eliminating slums, Spain**

Luxembourg: Publications office of the European Union, 2010

2010 - 30 pp, - 21 x 29.7 cm

ISBN: 978-92-9192-574-2

doi:10.2811/65302

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ISBN 978-92-9192-574-2



9 789291 925742

TK-30-10-306-EN-C



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