



*Best Practices for Roma Integration*

# Small Grants Programme

Summary of the Implementation  
of Selected Projects



Funded by the EU



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\* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/99 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

# Small Grants Programme Summary of the Implementation of Selected Projects

*December 2013*

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## I. Introduction

### Background

As mandated by the 2003 Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti within the OSCE Area, the Organization's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) works to address the situation of Roma and related groups in crisis and post-crisis situations. This is particularly true in the Western Balkans region, which was affected by ethnic tension and conflict in the 1990s, and where the members of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities, as displaced persons, still face the challenges of reintegration. Many governments in the region have developed Roma integration strategies and action plans, but their implementation at the local level is a long-term process. The anticipated impact of these plans on the situation of the Roma people in the areas of education, employment, housing and access to services remains incomplete. Governments in the Western Balkans have frequently expressed their willingness to enhance efforts in the implementation of action plans to ensure that Roma are truly benefitting. The international community can play a key role in supporting governments, centrally and locally, in this endeavour.

In 2011, ODIHR was awarded European Union (EU) funding for a regional project in the Western Balkans to strengthen the capacity of national and local governments and Roma civil society to promote social inclusion for Roma and combat the discrimination they face. The regional project "Best Practices for Roma Integration" (BPRI) commenced on 1 January 2012, and will continue for 27 months.

As a regional project in the Western Balkans, BPRI aims to contribute to the integration of Roma in the countries of the region, reflecting commitments they have made as OSCE participating States and with a view to possibly joining the EU. This project is funded by the European Union (90 per cent) and OSCE participating States (10 per cent), and also works in Kosovo.

The EU's Enlargement Directorate General held a number of high-level conferences on Roma involving all the governments in the region, and these produced a series of conclusions and commitments. If Roma are to truly benefit from these, governments will need to increase their efforts and find innovative solutions. Civil society organizations, and especially Roma NGOs, will need to continue advocating for reforms, proposing more inclusive solutions and raising awareness about the status of the Roma minority.

The BPRI project is supporting this process by promoting innovative programmes and facilitating co-operation between local and national governments, independent institutions and civil society.

### Objective of the Small Grants Programme

The main objective of the small grants programme was to improve the quality of life and access to rights of the Roma communities in the Western Balkans. The programme, throughout its implementation, paid particular attention to the social inclusion of the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities, while looking closely at gender, age, and urban/rural divisions.

The small grants programme aimed to support small-scale projects at the municipal level that were put forward by local self-governments in co-operation with Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian NGOs. Each municipality or commune in the region was eligible to receive grants of 5,000 euros per project, with total project funding of 100,000 euros available region-wide.

The small grants were meant to help local areas to meet their specific challenges. Representatives of Roma Ashkali and Egyptians communities said they felt that the small grant projects allowed them to tackle a range of local issues, including the lack of appropriate infrastructure, social isolation, a lack of services for the elderly, inclusion of young people and children into the education system, and health care-related concerns. In these local development projects, communities were consulted on priority needs in their settlements and municipalities. Local action plans were also taken into consideration. In most cases, small-scale infrastructure projects were undertaken, such as the reconstruction of roads, the digging of wells or repairs to schools, as well as educational programmes.

### Purpose and structure of the report

This report was commissioned within the framework of the project “Best Practices for Roma Integration”. Large amounts of funding have been allocated in the past by the EU to projects targeting the Roma, but many Roma communities report little or no change in the situation on the ground. Thus, it was important to highlight the positive changes brought by the small grants programme and the multiplier effect it might have in generating further interest from the local self-governments or donors. Despite the direct impact of small grant projects at the local level, this type of sub-contracting is currently limited under European Commission rules and the regulations for Instrument for Pre-Accession-funded projects.

### Methodology

In order for BPRI to enhance the accountability and transparency of the administration of its small grants programme, a participatory evaluation methodology was used to provide information on the usefulness and efficacy of the programme. It was important for the stakeholders to share their concerns about the grants they received and project implementation.

The specifics of the participatory evaluation methodology included a small grant selection committee, consisting of government officials and BPRI and local OSCE field operation staff, followed by monitoring visits by BPRI National Project Officers and the monitoring team, who conducted interviews with direct beneficiaries.

In September 2013, Ambassador Janez Lenarčič, Director of ODIHR, paid a monitoring visit to the municipality of Gračanica/Gračanice, in central Kosovo, to meet with municipal and Roma community representatives and discuss efforts to promote Roma integration and improve access to public services. During the visit to the Brnješ/Bërnjesh settlement, Lenarčič also met with Roma families benefiting from a new wastewater collector built in the settlement with a small grant from the BPRI project.

## Grant Selection Process

### *Municipal/Commune<sup>1</sup> Selection*

During the mapping of Roma integration by local self-governments conducted from March to May 2012, five to eight local municipalities in each jurisdiction were selected to participate in the grants programme. The programme was limited to local self-governments in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Montenegro. It was also implemented in Kosovo. Small grants were not awarded in Croatia and Serbia, as alternative grant resources exist in those countries and the amount available was comparatively small. The call for proposals was opened for 5,000 euro grants for each municipality, with a requirement that the municipalities contribute 10 per cent of the total budget.

### *Submission of the Project Proposal*

In developing project proposals, most municipalities established local project review boards as a co-ordination mechanism for identifying and prioritizing eligible grant projects. Roma NGOs were involved as members of the boards. The aim of the boards was to enhance local ownership and community support.

All the municipalities provided project proposals within one month of the call for submissions. All proposals were reviewed by a small grant commission, usually composed of OSCE and other international representatives, central government representatives and members of NGOs.

### *Proposal Review and Approval*

Each small grants commission made recommendations on projects to be funded, while paying special attention to the design, planning, implementation structure and stakeholder involvement of each proposal. In

reviewing and deciding on funding for the projects, the small grant commissions used the following criteria:

- \* How relevant is the proposal to the objectives and priorities of the BPRI project?
- \* How relevant is the proposal to the current or draft local Action Plans for Housing of Roma, or to the National Action Plan for Housing of Roma?
- \* How relevant to the particular needs and constraints of the target community is the proposal (including synergy with other similar initiatives and avoidance of duplication)?
- \* How clearly defined and strategically chosen are the target beneficiaries? Have their needs been clearly defined and does the proposal address them appropriately?
- \* Does the proposal contain specific added-value elements, such as promotion of gender equality and equal opportunities, meeting the needs of disabled people or identifying good practices?
- \* How coherent is the overall design of the project? In particular, does it reflect the analysis of the problems involved and take into account external factors and the relevant stakeholders?
- \* Is the project feasible and consistent in relation to the objectives and expected results?

### *Final Selection*

In line with the above selection criteria, the members of small grant commissions decided that the best project proposals included:

- \* Albania: Lezhë municipality, Lushnje municipality, Gjirokastër municipality and the commune of Grabian;
- \* Bosnia and Herzegovina: Jajce municipality, Lukavac municipality, City of Mostar, City of Prijedor;
- \* The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia: Kumanovo municipality, Prilep municipality, Štip municipality, Tetovo municipality; and
- \* Montenegro: Berane municipality, Bijelo Polje municipality, Herceg Novi municipality and City of Tivat.

<sup>1</sup> Please note that in Albania “communes” are local self-government units in rural areas; in the following sections where reference is made to “municipalities” this also includes Albania’s communes.

In Kosovo, project proposals in the Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje municipality, the Gračanica/Graçanicë municipality, the Prizren municipality and the Rahovec/Orahovac municipality were chosen.

Each project received approximately 5,000 euros. Most of the projects were in the field of infrastructure improvement, with the next largest number being in the area of education.

Field	No. of projects	Estimated number of beneficiaries annually	
		All beneficiaries	Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian beneficiaries
Infrastructure	16	13,525	4,982
Education	5	1,210	430
Culture & Media	1	10,000	5,500
Social Services	1	400	370
<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>25,135</b>	<b>11,282</b>

## List of Small Grant Projects

### Infrastructure

Jurisdiction	Local self-government unit	Type of work	Duration	Impact/ total population (annually)	Impact on Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians
Albania	Lezhë	Construction of stairs at a health centre in the Skenderbeg neighbourhood, Construction of a sewage system	January - June 2013	6,000 people	1,500 people
Albania	Lushnje	Paving a road in the Saver neighbourhood	January - June 2013	325 people	50 people
Albania	Grabian commune	Digging water wells, Improving the water supply and road infrastructure	January - June 2013	300 people for the water wells, 100 people for the water supply and road infrastructure	40 families (approximately 200 people) for the water wells, 50 people for the other activities
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Jajce	Building a water reservoir	July - November 2013	300 people	40 families (approximately 200 people)

Bosnia and Herzegovina	Prijedor	Construction of a sewage system and installing street lighting	July - November 2013	200 people	20 families (approximately 140 people)
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Lukavac	Asphalting a road	July - November 2013	1,000 people	217 people
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Mostar	Asphalting a road	July - November 2013	500 people	40 families (approximately 200 people)
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	Kumanovo	Cleaning a waste dump	July - November 2013	1,500 people	800 people
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	Prilep	Installing street lighting	July - November 2013	1,000 people	100 families (approximately 500 people)
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	Tetovo	Safety wall construction	July - November 2013	500 people	50 families (approximately 250 people)
<b>Total number of beneficiaries:</b>				<b>11,725</b>	<b>4,107</b>

### Education

Albania	Gjirokaštër	Improving school infrastructure	January - June 2013	100	40 children
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	Štip	Construction of a children's playground	July - November 2013	500	200 children
Montenegro	Berane	Assistance to pre-school and elementary school education	June - November 2013	200	60 children
Montenegro	Herceg Novi	Assistance to pre-school and elementary school education	June - November 2013	250	80 children
Montenegro	Tivat	Assistance to pre-school and elementary school education	June - November 2013	160	50 children
<b>Total number of beneficiaries:</b>				<b>1,210</b>	<b>430</b>



*Social Services*

Montenegro	Bijelo Polje	Opening of an office for Roma Inclusion	June - November 2013	400 persons	370 persons
<b>Total number of beneficiaries:</b>				<b>400</b>	<b>370</b>

## Small Grants Projects in Kosovo

*Infrastructure*

Local self-government unit	Type of work	Duration	Impact/ total population (annually)	Impact on Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians
Gračanica/ Gračanice	Building a sewage collector	February - July 2013	300 people	15 families ( 75 people)
Fushë Kosovë/ Kosovo Polje	Digging a fresh water well	February - July 2013	1,000 people	500 Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians
Orahovac/ Rahovec	Safety wall construction	February - July 2013	500 people	300 Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians

*Culture and Media*

Prizren	Equipment purchase for Radio Romano Avazo	February - July 2013	10,000 persons	5,500 persons
<b>Total number of beneficiaries:</b>			<b>11,800</b>	<b>6,375</b>

## 2. Project Details



**Commune:** *Grabian*

**Project budget:** *4,840 euros from BPRI and 760 euros from the commune*

**Target:** *Infrastructure*

**Project title:** *Improving the water supply and road infrastructure*

**Name of leading NGO:** *Romani Baxt Association*

**Project Manager:** *Avdi Snalla, Head of Grabian Commune, and Shkelqim Fetahu, Co-ordinator for Roma Issues at Grabian commune*

**Duration:** *January to June 2013*

In Grabian Commune, the Roma community, in co-operation with the Romani Baxt Association, identified several problems that the project worked to address:

- \* A lack of drinking water in the Roma neighbourhood meant that residents of this community regularly walked 500 metres to collect water in plastic bottles in other parts of the commune;
- \* An unpaved road leading to the neighbourhood known as the Pigs Farm Complex (due to a pig farm nearby) was impassable most of the year, due to mud and potholes, and was without lighting; and
- \* A lack of waste collection bins in the Pigs Farm Complex meant the neighbourhood was filled with waste.

Based on discussions with representatives of the Roma community, the Grabian commune and interest groups, a working group was set up to resolve these problems.

The experts brought in by the commune said that the ground water was protected from surface water and contamination, as there is an impermeable clay layer. This meant that the underground water was potable, and tests confirmed it was of high quality.

The project supported the digging of two wells, which have provided the community with a 24-hour water supply. The first well, drilled

to the depth of 134 metres, is used by approximately 15 Roma and Egyptian families. The second well, with a depth of 158 metres, serves approximately 32 families.

In addition, the project paved 200 metres of a local road and provided new street lighting. This road, used by 16 families living nearby, was made level. This intervention will enable better movement of vehicles and pedestrians in and out of the neighbourhood. Also, three waste containers were provided and the area is now being cleaned. The responsibility for maintaining the clean area and regular waste disposal is a new obligation the Grabian commune has committed to undertake.

With the two new water wells, a newly paved main road and street lighting, the living conditions of Roma communities in Grabian have improved, and this project will have a lasting impact on the residents.

2 INSTAT, Population and Housing Census 2011, (Tirana: INSTAT, 2012), <http://www.instat.gov.al/en/census/census-2011/census-2011-prefectures.aspx>.



*The local community, including Roma, use the newly built water well in Grabian commune.*

**Municipality:** Gjirokastër

**Project budget:** 5,000 euros from BPRI and 1,000 euros from the municipality

**Target:** Infrastructure and Education

**Project title:** Improving the infrastructure and teaching standards at the Se Bashku school

**Name of leading NGO:** Albanian Roma Union Amaro Drom

**Project Manager:** Vangjel Muço, Deputy Mayor, and Majko Majko, Co-ordinator for Roma Issues at Gjirokastër municipality

**Duration:** January to June 2013



Rehabilitation work at the Së Bashku school in Gjirokastër — painting the interior of the school, which also serves as a sport hall.



Painting the outer walls of the school.

According to the 2011 census, there are 91 Roma living in Gjirokastër and 21 Egyptians. However, NGOs and municipal officials estimate that some 100 Roma families and over 1,000 Egyptians live in the city.

In order to improve the education of Roma children in Gjirokastër, especially in the Roma neighbourhood where the “Se Bashku” elementary school is located, the project aimed to improve the school’s infrastructure.

Eighty children attend the “Se bashku” elementary school, and half of these are Roma and Egyptians. Only five teachers are engaged to teach the students. The school has a small paved courtyard (around 340 square metres) that was unusable in the winter and autumn. Inside the school is a large hall used for cultural and sporting events (about 170 square metres), in which the roof leaked. There was also a need for improvements to the school toilets.

Through the small grant project, the whole courtyard was paved and a few areas were adapted into green areas. The whole school was painted, inside and out. The holes in the roof of the hall inside the school were also repaired and the sanitary conditions in the toilets were improved.

Upon returning from summer vacation, Roma children found better conditions in their school and it is hoped the improved school environment will encourage them to continue their studies. Increasing the level of education is a prerequisite for Roma children to integrate in the social and economic life in the Gjirokastër municipality.



**Municipality:** Lezhë  
**Project budget:** 4,894 euros from BPRI and 805 euros from the municipality  
**Target:** Infrastructure  
**Project title:** Improving infrastructure in the Skënderbeg neighbourhood  
**Name of leading NGO:** Association INR (Integration of Northern Roma)  
**Project Manager:** Dile Nikolla, Director of Directorate for Programming and Development, Lezhë municipality, and Man Sinani, from the INR Association  
**Duration:** January to June 2013

The Roma and Egyptian communities live together in the Skënderbeg neighbourhood. According to unofficial statistics, there are 84 Roma families and about 200 Egyptian families in Lezhë, and most households in this community live in rented flats or houses in poor condition, with problematic infrastructure. The Association INR, together with the municipality, identified several issues to be tackled through this project, mainly to construct stairs for the local health clinic, improve the sewage system and connect the Roma neighbourhood with the city centre.

The stairs of the local clinic were very narrow and sloped, making it difficult for patients to access the clinic to receive proper medical care. Thanks to the small grant, new stairs were constructed not only for the clinic, but also to the road that connects the neighbourhood with the city centre.

In addition, the sewage system was in very bad condition, especially the portion close to the Egyptian and Roma homes, putting the community at risk of disease. Thus, 100 metres of the open sewage system was first cleaned of all waste, and new plastic sewage pipes were installed, improving its structure and decreasing the possibility of spreading disease.

The renovated stairs and sewage system will improve the living conditions for the Roma and Egyptians living in the Skënderbeg neighbourhood in Lezhë.



Construction work on the sewage system in Lezhë.

**Municipality:** Lushnje

**Project budget:** 4,872 euros from BPRI and 500 euros from the municipality

**Target:** Infrastructure

**Project title:** Improving road infrastructure

**Name of leading NGO:** Albanian Roma Union Amaro Drom

**Project Manager:** Eriselda Cefa, Chief of Cabinet, Lushnje municipality, and Ferit Milanj, Co-ordinator for Roma Issues and Co-ordinator/Chairman of the NGO Amaro Drom

**Duration:** January to June 2013



The municipality of Lushnje has approximately 70 Roma families, located in the Saver quarter on the outskirts of the city. This small grant project focused on improving the road infrastructure on V. Nova Street. This newly constructed road, 83 metres long and four metres wide, runs among Roma houses. In addition, a small drainage channel was opened and runs along the road, in order to collect water during rainfall and lead it to the existing sewage system. The Roma families living in the area and 50 others will directly benefit from this intervention.

The improvement of this road has allowed the Roma community to have quality infrastructure and a clean environment around their homes.



*The newly built road in Lushnje.*

## Bosnia and Herzegovina<sup>3</sup>

**Municipality:** Jajce

**Project budget:** 5,000 euros from BPRI and 10,853 euros from the municipality

**Target:** Infrastructure

**Project title:** Provision of water to the Skela Roma settlement

**Project Manager:** Faruk Mecavica, Project Manager, and Vernesa Zekic, Municipal Referent for Roma Issues, Jajce municipality

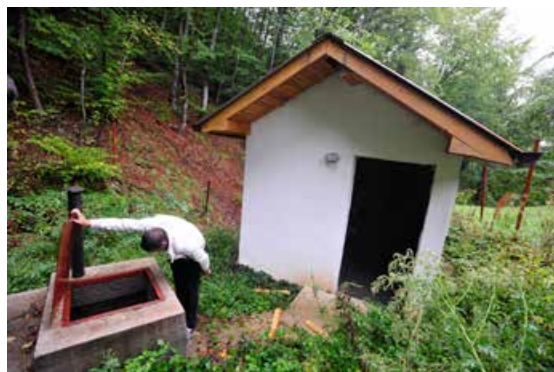
**Duration:** July to November 2013

Nearly the entire Roma population from Jajce, some 336 people, reside in the settlement of Skela. This settlement did not have a functional water supply prior to this project. During the spring and summer the ground water is very low. Residents could only expect an uninterrupted water supply for half of the year. Disruptions were caused by the insufficient capacity of the water source, and the only solution was to supplement it with a new, high-capacity source.

The small grant project helped to provide a new water source and a pump that is integrated into the new system. This has enabled a continuous, year-round water supply.

The project is sustainable, thanks to an agreement to undertake administration and maintenance of the new water supply system by the Public Company for Water Management and Sewage, as it does with all water supply systems in the Jajce Municipality.

<sup>3</sup> No official data was used for Bosnia and Herzegovina as the last census dates back to 1991.



*A water reservoir to be connected to the new water source in Jajce.*



**Municipality:** Lukavac

**Project budget:** 5,000 euros from BPRI and 17,500 euros from the municipality

**Target:** Infrastructure

**Project title:** *Asphalting the road in the Roma settlement, Svatovac (Poljice Gornje)*

**Project Manager:** *Mina Frljanovic, Municipal Referent for Roma Issues,  
Lukavac municipality*

**Duration:** *July to November 2013*



*The previous condition of the unrepaired road in the Svatovac Roma settlement in Lukavac.*

The Roma settlement of Svatovac is situated in the southern part of the Lukavac Municipality. The 500-metre-long and 3-metre-wide road towards the Svatovac settlement was in very bad condition, bumpy and without drainage. Access to the settlement was impeded during the rainy period because of the debris and frequent landslides deposited on the road.

There are 217 inhabitants in the settlement, including 34 children, most of whom attend the Primary School in Poljice, 4 kilometres away. Additionally, the settlement houses a significant number of elderly people, who often need medical assistance. To ensure better access for these groups, the municipality decided to use the small grant for asphaltting the main road.

This improved access to the Roma settlement and the children's commute to school. The whole settlement benefited from the improved infrastructure.



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- Municipality:** Mostar  
**Project budget:** 5,000 euros from BPRI and 500 euros from the city  
**Target:** Infrastructure  
**Project title:** Repairing the road in the Roma settlement  
**Project Manager:** Bozo Coric, Head of the Department for Social Affairs,  
City of Mostar  
**Duration:** July to November 2013
- 

Although the access road to the newly built Roma settlement in Bišće Polje in Mostar was relatively short (250 metres), its poor condition hampered traffic, especially during rain or snow.

This new settlement, consisting of 30 houses, was financed by the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Swiss Caritas. However, the Ministry did not have sufficient funds to asphalt the road that connects the settlement to the main road. Therefore, the small grant was used to remedy the situation by asphaltting the road. The improved road benefits not only the residents of the new homes, but also the inhabitants of older and illegal housing nearby.

The newly asphalted road will have a long lasting impact in the settlement, allowing the Roma community to benefit from better access.



*The previous condition of the unrepaired road in the Bišće Polje Roma settlement in Mostar.*



*The road prior to asphaltting.*

**Municipality:** Prijedor

**Project budget:** 5,000 euros from BPRI and 500 euros from the city

**Target:** Infrastructure

**Project title:** Improving the living conditions in the Brđani Roma settlement

**Project Manager:** Stanko Markovic, Project Co-ordinator, City of Prijedor

**Duration:** July to November 2013

The Roma population living in the urban neighbourhoods of Prijedor enjoy solid infrastructure, unlike those who live in the less developed areas. The infrastructure priority in these areas has been the improvement of the road and reconstruction of individual housing units inhabited by Roma.

In the settlement of Brđani (in the local community of Hambarine), there are 20 Roma families. As there is no sewage system in the settlement, inhabitants used improvised septic tanks or drainage through plastic pipes that led to channels built along the road. This creates a risk of disease, as well as subjecting inhabitants to an unpleasant odour, particularly during the summer. This situation often led to conflict in the settlement, and intervention by the communal police and sanitation inspectorate were frequent.

In addition, a complete lack of street lighting in the settlement created a security issue

for students returned to their homes in the evening hours. This problem also contributed to robberies of elderly inhabitants and looting of housing units, which occurred relatively frequently.

With the funding from the small grant, 900 metres of street was provided with lighting, while drainage for waste water was constructed along 200 metres of the road.

The new lighting has contributed to improved security for children and other inhabitants who return to their homes in the evening hours. Construction of the sewage channel is helping to improve the sanitary and health conditions of the residents and decreasing the incidence of disease.

The City of Prijedor will be responsible for the maintenance and ongoing costs of electricity for the street lighting, while the maintenance of the sewage channel will be an integral part of its road maintenance programme.



*New plastic pipes used for drainage of waste water in Brđani settlement in Prijedor.*



*Drainage for waste water was constructed along the road.*

## The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

**Municipality:** Kumanovo

**Project budget:** 5,000 euros from BPRI and 500 euros from the municipality  
Target: Environment

**Project title:** A clean environment for a better life

**Name of leading NGO:** Roma Community Centre DROM

**Project Manager:** Ahmet Jasarevski, Executive Director of the NGO DROM

**Duration:** July to November 2013

This project sought to clean an illegal waste dump near the Roma settlement of Pero Chicho in Kumanovo, as well as to create an “eco-corner”, by raising awareness among local inhabitants about the protection and promotion of a clean environment. The waste dump is situated near the Roma settlement and close to the railway tracks. The municipality had previously cleaned the area, but waste returned with both the Roma community and other residents using it as a disposal area.

Before starting the clean-up activities, the NGO Roma Community Centre DROM prepared a Romani-language campaign to raise these issues with the residents of the Pero Chicho settlement. A moving barrier was also placed at the entrance to the waste site, so that no one would be able to access the area without being seen by the local authorities. In the final stage of the project, the site was cleaned of illegal waste, and a container and fence were provided. A sign at the entrance (in Macedonian, Albanian and Romani) informs people that dumping waste there is prohibited.

Thanks to these awareness-raising activities, it is hoped that the area will remain clean and the residents will benefit from a better living environment.



*The Roma settlement of Pero Chicho in Kumanovo awaiting cleaning.*

**Municipality:** Tetovo

**Project budget:** 5,000 euros from BPRI and 1,000 euros from the municipality

**Target:** Infrastructure

**Project title:** A safe home for the Roma

**Name of leading NGO:** Roma Democratic Development Association Sonce

**Project Manager:** Nezir Husein, Deputy President, Roma Democratic Development Association Sonce

**Duration:** July to November 2013

This project aimed to improve the safety of some 50 Roma houses in the settlement of Prohorpchinska, in Tetovo. These houses were subject to potential landslides from the adjacent mountain. Landslides represent a serious problem, causing damage to roads, buildings and other structures, and disrupting the activities of local people. The incidence of landslides

is particularly high during autumn and winter, when rainfall contributes to erosion.

The project installed a safety ramp to prevent landslides from affecting this Roma settlement. The small grant project significantly improved the safety of the houses of 50 families and contributed to better conditions for the Roma population in the Tetovo municipality.

**Municipality:** Štip

**Project budget:** 4,904 euros from BPRI and 476 euros from the municipality

**Target:** Recreational infrastructure

**Project title:** Urban landscaping of a children's playground

**Name of leading NGO:** Association for a Multi-ethnic Society and Human Rights

**Project Manager:** Erol Ademov, President of the Association for a Multi-ethnic Society and Human Rights

**Duration:** July to November 2013



Roma children eagerly await the new playground in the Radanski Pat Roma settlement of in Štip.

This project constructed a children's playground — the first ever to be built in the predominantly Roma settlement of Radanski Pat. The playground is an important meeting place for both Roma and non-Roma children, allowing them to socialize through play.

The playground is 8 metres square and located in the vicinity of an elementary school attended by many of the Roma children. The playground can be used by children up to 14 years of age, improving the social lives and enhancing the communication skills of Roma children through socialization and play with their non-Roma peers.

The playground provides an important focal point within the community where children can play safely and adults can meet to discuss and share ideas.



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**Municipality:** Prilep

**Project budget:** 5,000 euros from BPRI and 1,000 euros from the municipality

**Target:** Infrastructure

**Project title:** Infrastructure for electrical lighting on Erdovan Sabanoski street in the settlement of Trizla 2, in Prilep

**Name of leading NGO:** Romska Solza

**Project Manager:** Samija Ajdini, Officer on Inter-Ethnic Relations, Municipality of Prilep, and Beti Feratovska, President of the NGO Romska Solza

**Duration:** July to November 2013

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This project improved the living conditions of approximately 100 Roma households, by installing appropriate lighting on their street. Erdovan Sabanoski street, where the Roma community is settled, did not have any lightning, making it unsafe after sunset, contributing to traffic accidents and increasing the risk of burglaries. Thanks to small grant funding, lights were installed along 300 metres of road, with the municipality committed to maintain it and pay for the electricity. This project will have a sustainable impact on the community by significantly increasing security in the settlement.



Street lighting was needed in Erdovan Sabanoski Street in the Trizla settlement in Prilep.



# Montenegro<sup>4</sup>

**Municipality:** Berane

**Project budget:** 5,000 euros from BPRI and 500 euros from the municipality

**Target:** Education

**Project title:** Assistant mediators in education

**Name of leading NGO:** Djeca Enfants, Berane

**Project Manager:** Smail Pepic, President of the NGO Djeca Enfants

**Duration:** June to November 2013

Berane is home to 531 Roma and 170 Egyptians, out of a total population is 33,970. In this community, the small grant project focused on the inclusion of Roma and Egyptian children in the education system. Significant problems exist in this field because of high drop-out rates, low attendance and problems faced by Roma and Egyptian children in absorbing the curriculum. These issues stem from their poor financial situation, language barriers and lack of awareness of parents about the importance of education.

The project targeted 142 children from the pre-school institution Radmila Nedic and public elementary school Radomir Nedic (mostly in the first and second grades). Three assistant mediators were selected to work with these children during the six-month period from June to November 2013. The role of assistant mediators was to be the bridge between the children, their families and schools, which is essential for the full integration of these children. The assistant mediators provided lessons in the

Montenegrin language and assisted the children with their homework.

Before the project started, the NGO Djeca enfants visited the Roma and Egyptian families and encouraged them to allow their children to attend this programme. In co-operation with Save the Children, this NGO has been working on education issues in Berane for the last six years.

This example of successful co-operation among local communities, the municipality, NGOs and international organizations was presented at a local roundtable organized by the BPRI project and Save the Children in October 2013. The gathering was an opportunity to discuss the models for sustainability of these types of education measures, which are essential for the integration of Roma children in Berane and other parts Montenegro.

<sup>4</sup> Statistical Office of Montenegro, Census 2011 Data – Montenegro, <http://www.monstat.org/eng/page.php?id=394&pageid=57>.



Roma and Egyptian children working with an assistant mediator in Berane.



Extra-curricular activities for Roma and Egyptian children in Berane.

**Municipality:** Bijelo Polje  
**Project budget:** 5,000 euros from BPRI and 900 euros from the municipality  
**Target:** Social services  
**Project title:** Office for Roma Issues  
**Name of leading NGO:** E-Roma  
**Project Manager:** Ismet Selimovic, President of the NGO E-Roma  
**Duration:** June to November 2013



*The new premises of the Office for Roma Issues in Bijelo Polje municipality that provides support to resolve social and economic issues.*

In the municipality of Bijelo Polje, there are 334 Roma, out of a total population of 46,051.

The main aim of this project was to improve access to municipal services and information for the Roma community in Bijelo Polje. The municipality provided space for an Office for Roma Issues close to the centre. The office provides free legal assistance to the Roma population in resolving issues with civil registration and other socio-economic issues.

The small grant project established the Office for Roma Issues, by hiring one person from the Roma community to work with the assistance of an expert from the municipality. The municipality provided furniture for the office, while BPRI equipped it with IT equipment. Two hundred copies of the Local Action Plan for Integration of Roma in the Municipality of Bijelo Polje were printed and disseminated to the local Roma population in several settlements, and the new Office for Roma Issues organized public presentations of this plan.

The municipality also engaged in the promotion of the Office for Roma Issues, where the local Roma population can get free assistance in the process of registration. These efforts are on-going, as many Roma in Montenegro still have citizenship issues and problems that prevent them from accessing free medical care and other public services. The Office for Roma Issues will also provide economic assistance through mediation for the employment of Roma in co-operation with the Employment Agency in Bijelo Polje.

After the completion of this project, the municipality will evaluate the results of this office in line with the Local Action Plan for Integration of Roma in the municipality of Bijelo Polje and decide on further support for this office.

**Municipality:** Herceg Novi

**Project budget:** 5,000 euros from BPRI and 500 euros from the municipality

**Target:** Education

**Project title:** Education for Integration

**Name of leading NGO:** Mladi Romi

**Project Manager:** Mehmet Berisa, Director of the NGO Mladi Romi –  
Herceg Novi

**Duration:** June to November 2013

The municipality of Herceg Novi is home to 258 Roma and 28 Egyptians, out of a total population of 30,864.

Many Roma children in Herceg Novi have grades in school, especially in the higher grades of elementary school, as well as high drop-out rates and low pre-school attendance. Some children also do not speak the local language, as they are refugees from Kosovo.

During the summer, the NGO Mladi Romi compiled baseline data about the school success of Roma children, and held a workshop for Roma parents to inform them about the project. Almost half of the 64 children surveyed (48 per cent) had only a 3.00 grade average in school, while 36 per cent had only a 2.00 grade average. Only a small portion of students achieved a 4.00 or 5.00 average (around 11 per cent), and 5 per cent of students were failing. Alarmingly, only 10 young Roma continued their education past the primary level

in 2013/2014 (eight attending high-school and two in university).

In order to improve the situation, two assistant mediators were selected to work with Roma children in the Ilija Kišić public elementary school in Zelenika during the first semester of the 2013/2014 school year. Two computers and educational materials were provided for work with the children. A couple of weeks before school started, the assistant mediators held workshops for Roma children who were scheduled to start the first grade, to help them prepare for and adjust to the new environment.

During the fall semester, the assistant mediators worked with the children on a daily basis, helping them with homework and language skills. The baseline survey conducted by Mladi Romi found that 64 Roma students were enrolled in four local primary schools, and more half of them requested assistance from the mediators. In addition, the Ministry of Education provided textbooks free of charge, and the municipality distributed other school supplies as a contribution to the small grant project.

This project is important for providing Roma children with an opportunity to fully participate in the education programme, improve their language skills and effectively absorb new school material.



NGO Mladi Romi presenting the project activities and expected results in Herceg Novi.



**Municipality:** Tivat

**Project budget:** 5,000 euros from BPRI and an in-kind contribution from the municipality

**Target:** Education

**Project title:** Education for a Better Future

**Name of leading NGO:** Association of Egyptians, Tivat

**Project Manager:** Dzafer Brahim, President of the Association of Egyptians

**Duration:** June to November 2013

In the municipality of Tivat, there are 35 Roma and 335 Egyptians, out of a total population of 14,031.

The small grant project targeted pre-school aged Roma children, with the aim to increase their enrolment in elementary school. Data from 2012 showed that only 17 children from the Roma community enrolled in pre-school institutions, while 116 students attended elementary school. This project aimed to increase this number in 2014.

Two assistants were hired to work with the pre-school children in the only public pre-school institution where Roma children are enrolled. From June to August, approximately 30 children, both pre-schoolers and elementary school pupils (grades 1-4), attended classes and workshops twice per week, including Montenegrin-language lessons. From September to November, the assistants were re-allocated to the public elementary school, providing assistance to Roma children after regular classes and helping them in finishing their homework.

By increasing the pre-school attendance of Roma children, the project contributed to the long-term aim of the municipality of Tivat to increase the number of Roma children attending (and completing) elementary school.



*Roma and Egyptian children play and learn with newly hired assistants in Tivat.*

### 3. Kosovo\* Project Details



**Municipality:** Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje

**Project budget:** 4,950 euros from BPRI and 950 euros from the municipality

**Target:** Infrastructure

**Project title:** Digging a water well

**Project Manager:** Ejup Qyqalla, Director of Urbanism Department, Fushë Kosovë/  
Kosovo Polje municipality

**Duration:** February to July 2013



*The newly built water well in Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje.*

The municipality of Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje is home to 34,827 people, including 436 Roma, 3,230 Ashkali and 282 Egyptians. The inhabitants suffer from a lack of clean drinking water. The problem was more pronounced in Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian settlements, due to their poor living conditions. In order to address the situation, the municipality used the small grant project to dig a well in the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Settlement 07, which has approximately 350 inhabitants.

Located in the centre of the settlement, the well is 20 metres deep and has an electrical pump and two water taps. A small concrete cabin was also built to house the electrical pump.

This project will have a sustainable impact on the community by making it possible for every family to connect their house's water system to the new well. In this way, Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians living in this settlement will have improved living conditions, hygiene and health.<sup>5</sup>

\* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/99 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

<sup>5</sup> Kosovo Agency of Statistics, Kosovo Population and Housing Census 2011 Final results: Main Data (Prishtinë/Priština: Kosovo Agency of Statistics, 2012), <http://census.rks-gov.net/istarMDEE/MD/dawinciMD.jsp?a1=-C&a2=qF0&n=1UR906000911S&o=0D&v=1UR060ET0009100000&p=0&sp=null&l=0&exp=0>.

**Municipality:** Gračanica/Graçanicë  
**Project budget:** 5,000 euros from BPRI and 500 euros from the municipality  
**Target:** Infrastructure  
**Project title:** Building a Sewage Collector in Brnješ/Bernjesh 1  
**Project Manager:** Nebojsa Peric, Advisor to the Mayor, Gračanica/Graçanicë municipality  
**Duration:** February to July 2013

A relatively large number (852) of the 10,675 inhabitants of Gračanica/Graçanicë are Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians. The Roma neighbourhood of Brnješ/Bernjesh 1 had a poor, handmade sewage system. It was often blocked and did not meet the minimum prescribed standards or the actual needs of the local community.

The upper parts of the village had resolved this issue by discharging their waste water in open channels along the local asphalt road, which leads to a sports complex, and the open sewage created considerable hygiene and health problems for the residents. As a result, the Municipality renewed this part of the sewage system, where the sewage flows across a nodal manhole on the left side of the road between Prishtinë/Priština and Gjilan/Gnjilane.

The idea behind this small grant proposal was to design a sewage system network in such a way that, in addition to collecting the discharge previously directed to the sports complex, there would be opportunities to feed other household waste water into this system in the future. This allows the residents of the district, mostly Roma, to join the system through an organized waste water run-off collector. The collected water is passed from the main pipeline to the main sewage collection system on the road between Prishtinë/Priština and Gjilan/Gnjilane.

Thanks to small grant funding, the municipality of Gračanica/Graçanicë built 220 metres of a sanitary sewage collector line, with 8 manholes, and connected it to the existing underground sanitary sewage collector in Brnješ/Bernjesh 1.

The direct beneficiaries of this project are 15 families, a total of approximately 75 Roma.



*The outdated and non-functional sewage system before repairs in the Roma neighbourhood of Brnješ/Bërnjesh I in Gračanica/Graçanicë.*



*The sewage system after repairs.*



**Municipality:** Prizren

**Project budget:** 4,950 euros from BPRI and 600 euros from the municipality

**Target:** Media

**Project title:** Improving access to media and increasing the opportunities for Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities

**Name of leading NGO:** Durmish Asllano

**Project Manager:** Nexhip Menekshe, Director of the NGO Durmish Asllano, Prizren

**Duration:** February to July 2013

Prizren has a total population of 177,781 people, including 2,899 Roma, 1,350 Ashkali and 168 Egyptians.

Romani Avazo is the only radio station with programming only in Romani language in Kosovo. The main office is located in the premises of the NGO Durmish Asllano in Prizren, and its signal can be heard throughout the Prizren region.

In order to strengthen the radio transmitter's signal and increase its transmission distance, the small grant project provided a number of pieces of radio equipment. The number of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian listeners in the Prizren region is 5,500, while the number of all listeners is estimated to be approximately 10,000.

Romani Avazo is a very popular station, since it covers many fields through entertainment and information programmes, as well as debates. Radio shows regularly cover different topics of interest to the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities, including elections, and health and education. Municipal representatives, civil society and political representatives from the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities have made guest appearances.

The Romani Avazo radio station, through its programmes and improved equipment, helps realize the rights of communities to be informed in their language, raises awareness about the importance of participation in decision-making bodies, and improves the socio-economic situation of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians in general.



*The new equipment for Romani Avazo radio station in Prizren.*

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**Municipality:** *Rahovec/Orahovac*  
**Project budget:** *4,000 euros from BPRI and 640 euros from the municipality*  
**Target:** *Infrastructure*  
**Project title:** *Sustaining Wall*  
**Project Manager:** *Fatmir Kryeziu, Director of Urbanism Department,  
Rahovec/Orahovac municipality*  
**Duration:** *February to July 2013*

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Official data show that the total population of Rahovec/Orahovac is 56,208; with 84 Roma, 404 Ashkali and 299 Egyptians.

Boracka Street, in the upper part of Rahovec/Orahovac, is very narrow with houses built on both sides. The street's residents are from the Roma and Serbian communities.

One part of the street is on a small hill, which is in danger of landslides during the autumn and winter, due to rainfall and the inclination of the street. The existing wall is dilapidated and in danger of falling down and endangering the life of pedestrians, especially the young children who go to school each day on the road.

The new wall is 17.5 metres long and 3.5 metres high, which also widened the existing narrow road by approximately a half a metre, as the previous wall was thicker.

This new support wall will have a lasting impact on the community. Residents will feel safer to travel along Boracka Street and experience a general improvement in their living conditions.



*The new support wall in Rahovec/Orahovac municipality.*

## 4. Conclusion

The project “Best Practices for Roma Integration” used the small grants to improve the living conditions in 20 Roma settlements throughout the Western Balkans. These practical, local initiatives benefitted some 25,135 residents, including 11,282 Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians. From building water wells and providing street lighting to promoting the education of children, Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian NGOs and municipal governments proposed a wide variety of projects that identified the main needs and priorities for the development of these communities.

Although the funding was limited to 5,000 euros per municipality, these small projects prove that concrete results can be achieved with good will and innovative ideas. Unfortunately, funding for this type of sub-contracting work is limited within Instrument for Pre-Accession projects, but BPRI benefited from working with motivated partners, including local governments, Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities and NGOs, and ministries.

The experience gained during this process leads to the following recommendations:

- \* Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities and NGOs should be consulted during project design and implementation;
- \* Local governments that have adopted Action Plans for Roma Inclusion should be supported in the implementation of these documents, as municipal funding is often insufficient;
- \* Application forms for local projects should be relatively simple, and information sessions should be held for potential applicants;
- \* At least 18 months should be allocated for the implementation of the small grant programme, as elections often delay the process; and
- \* Greater funding should be provided for the implementation of similar small grant schemes in the future.



