



Roma

IN AN EXPANDING EUROPE

Breaking the Poverty Cycle



Dena Ringold

Mitchell A. Orenstein

Erika Wilkens



CONFERENCE EDITION

CONFERENCE EDITION

Roma in an Expanding Europe:
Breaking the Poverty Cycle

By

Dena Ringold

Mitchell A. Orenstein

and

Erika Wilkens



A World Bank Study

Copyright © 2003 The International Bank for Reconstruction and
Development /THE WORLD BANK
1818 H Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20433, USA

All rights reserved

The findings, interpretations, and conclusions expressed here are
those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the
Board of Executive Directors of the World Bank or the governments
they represent.

Cover design by Joyce Petruzzelli
Typography by Don Rau, Word Design, Inc.
Cover photos by Mathieu Mazza and Dena Ringold

TABLE OF CONTENTS

FOREWORDvii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	viii
OVERVIEW	1
Context and Contents	3
The Environment for Policy Development	4
Policy Implications and Approaches	6
Conclusions	10
1 INTRODUCTION	11
History	13
Roma in the Transition Period	15
Roma Diversity, Culture, and Social Exclusion	16
Policy Approaches and Debates	18
Conclusions	24
2 ROMA POVERTY AND WELFARE: AN OVERVIEW	26
Measurement Challenges	26
An Analysis of Roma Poverty in Three Countries	28
Housing	32
Labor Market Status	35
Education Status	37
Health Status	41
Conclusions	45
3 POVERTY AND EXCLUSION: ROMA SETTLEMENTS IN THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC	47
Roma in Slovakia	47
Poverty in Roma Settlements	50
Economic Activities and Coping Strategies	57
Access to Social Services	61
Addressing Poverty in Settlements	66

4	THE DIVERSITY OF ROMA IN ROMANIA	68
	From Slavery to Ceaucescu	68
	Diversity of Roma Settlements	70
	Income Sources and Economic Opportunities	72
	Access to Social Services	75
	Social and Ethnic Relations	86
	Current Policy Developments	88
	Conclusions	90
5	PROJECT EXPERIENCE IN HUNGARY	92
	A Regional Frontrunner	92
	Government Policies and Approaches	94
	Project Experience: An Overview	98
	Project Case Studies	102
	Project Experience: Lessons Learned	107
	Conclusions	109
6	ROMA IN SPAIN	112
	Roma in Spain: A Western European Example	112
	Living Conditions of Spanish Roma	118
	Conclusions	123
7	THE ROAD AHEAD	125
	The Nature of Roma Poverty and the Policy Context	125
	Policy Implications and Approaches	127
	Policy Directions	133
	Conclusions	139
	REFERENCES	141

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1.1:	A Typology of Roma Policy Approaches in Europe	19
Table 2.1:	Poverty Rates among Roma and Non-Roma Households, 2000	28
Table 2.2:	Roma Population Sizes by Type of Identification, 2000	29
Table 2.3:	Main Poverty Correlates, 2000	30
Table 2.4:	Housing Characteristics by Ethnicity, 2000	34
Table 2.5:	Educational Attainment by Ethnicity, 2000	38
Table 4.1:	Main Features of the Case Study Sites, 1999	71
Table 4.2:	Roma Population in Case Study Communities	72
Table 4.3:	Income Sources and Economic Stratification, 1999	74
Table 4.4:	Roma School Attendance Trends, National, 1993	76
Table 4.5:	Share of Roma Students in Valcele, 1999	76
Table 4.6:	Access to Education in the Case Study Communities, 1999	77
Table 4.7:	Roma Access to Local Medical Services in the Case Study Communities, 1999	81
Table 4.8:	Access to Social Assistance in Case Study Communities, 1999	84

Table 5.1: Hungarian Minorities in Other Countries	93
Table 5.2: Government Budgetary Support for Minorities	95
Table 5.3: Roma MSG Local Development Initiatives, 1998	97
Table 5.4: Project Inventory, 1990–1999	99
Table 5.5: Projects by Region, 1990–1999	99
Table 5.6: Distribution of Projects by Sector, 1990–1999	101
Table 5.7: Projects by Donors, 1990–1999	101
Table 5.8: Program and Activities Supported under the Social Land Program	105
Table 6.1: Roma Population Estimates, Selected Western European Countries	114
Table 6.2: Roma Population per Autonomous Community (estimates, 1993–1999)	120
Table 7.1: PHARE-Funded Programs for Roma in Central and Eastern Europe, 1993–2001 ...	127

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Poverty Rates, 2000	2
Figure 1.1: Estimated Roma Population in Central and Eastern Europe	12
Figure 1.2: Poverty Rates in Selected Transition Countries	13
Figure 2.1: Household Size in Bulgaria, Hungary, and Romania, 2000	34
Figure 2.2: Duration of Unemployment, 2000	36
Figure 2.3: Enrollments in Education, 2000	38
Figure 2.4: Age Structure of Roma and the Total Population in the Czech Republic, 1991	42
Figure 3.1: Registered Unemployment by Education and Ethnicity, 1999	58
Figure 3.2: Unemployment by Duration, 1999	58

LIST OF BOXES

Box 1: In Their Own Words	9
Box 2.1: Who Are Roma?	29
Box 2.2: Spatial Segregation within Roma Settlements	33
Box 2.3: Measuring Unemployment	36
Box 2.4: School Drop-Outs in Bulgaria: The Case of the Missing Children	39
Box 2.5: Entrance to Remedial Special Schools in the Czech Republic	40
Box 2.6: Heroin Addiction in Varna, Bulgaria	45
Box 3.1: The Study of Roma Settlements in Slovakia	48
Box 3.2: Typology of Perceptions of Social Status	52
Box 3.3: Housing Conditions in a Village in Stará Lubovňa	56
Box 4.1: The Qualitative Study of Roma Communities in Romania	70
Box 4.2: Government Education Initiatives Targeting Roma	78
Box 4.3: The Partnership Fund for Roma: Pilot Projects	89
Box 5.1: Public Foundations in Hungary	100
Box 6.1: The History of Roma in Spain	113
Box 6.2: The Andalusian Plan for the Roma Community	115
Box 6.3: The Acceder Program: Training and Employment Services	117
Box 6.4: The School Monitoring Program, Municipality of Madrid	119
Box 6.5: Roma Housing Program in Madrid	121

Box 7.1: Monitoring and Evaluating School Success for Roma Children	131
Box 7.2: Promoting Roma Employment	133
Box 7.3: Alternative Secondary Schools in Hungary	135
Box 7.4: Desegregation of Roma Schools in Bulgaria: The Vidin Model	136
Box 7.5: Lessons from US Welfare Reform	137

FOREWORD

Roma have suffered from severe poverty and exclusion throughout European history. For many Roma in Central and Eastern Europe, the period of transition from communism has been especially dire. Low education and skill levels, compounded by discrimination, have led to widespread long-term unemployment and deteriorating living conditions. Even in countries on the brink of accession to the European Union, Roma are likely to live in poverty and lack access to education, health care, housing, and other services.

Their plight has not gone unnoticed. Over the past decade, governments, civil society, and the international community have actively supported initiatives to keep Roma children in school, expand access to jobs, and overcome discrimination. Many of these interventions have helped, and the time is right to scale up. Lessons from these projects can make policies more inclusive and can expand their reach. This volume calls for an inclusive approach to overcoming Roma poverty, based on increased involvement and participation of Roma in society, and respect for their diversity.

There is reason for optimism. The process of EU accession has focused attention on the need to address Roma exclusion at the national level and has highlighted common European challenges. Most importantly, a small but growing core of experienced and dedicated young Roma leaders now can work both within their communities and with governments to advocate change.

This volume was prepared for the conference “Roma in an Expanding Europe: Challenges for the Future” in Budapest, Hungary, June 30–July 1, 2003. I hope that this conference will catalyze an ongoing dialogue between the new Roma leadership and the wider policy community that will improve the living conditions and future opportunities of Roma over the long term.



James D. Wolfensohn
President
The World Bank

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This volume brings together analysis done by teams of researchers in different countries. The authors benefited from the guidance and inputs of peer reviewers Christine Jones and Ana Revenga. Useful comments and contributions at various stages were received from Ziad Alahdad, Asad Alam, Warren Bass, Tünde Buzetzy, Mukesh Chawla, Armin Fidler, Richard Florescu, Clare Gillsater, Boryana Gotcheva, Daniela Gressani, Richard Hirschler, Franz Kaps, Alexandre Marc, Veronica Nyhan, Alexey Proskuryakov, Michal Rutkowski, Ana Maria Sandi, Merrell Tuck-Primdahl, and Julius Varallyay. Maureen Lewis and Annette Dixon provided feedback and overall guidance throughout. Ian Conachy prepared the document for publication.

The main data sources and contributors are as follows:

Chapter Two: The second chapter draws on an analysis by Ana Revenga, Dena Ringold, and William Martin Tracy of a three-country household survey of poverty and ethnicity. The dataset was made available by Iván Szelényi and his team at the Center for Comparative Research in the Sociology Department of Yale University.

Chapter Three: The qualitative study of Roma settlements in Slovakia was undertaken by Slovak researchers led by Iveta Radicova of the

SPACE Foundation along with Michal Vašečka of the Institute of for Public Affairs (IVO), and Michal Šebesta of the Department of Political Science, Faculty of Arts, Comenius University. Helen Shahriari and Dena Ringold led the work at the World Bank and wrote the final report. Imrich Vašečka was a consultant to the team, and Marián Babitz of the SPACE Foundation was the Project Assistant. The listing of the field research team can be found in the full report: "Poverty and Welfare of Roma in the Slovak Republic," available at: www.worldbank.org/eca/roma.

Chapter Four: The qualitative study of Roma communities in Romania was conducted by the Romanian researchers Cosima Rughinis and Marian Preda. Comments were provided by Liliana Proteasa of the Ministry of Education and Research.

Chapter Five: The project inventory and case studies were carried out by a team of Hungarian researchers led by János Zolnay and included: Gábor Bernáth, Angéla Kóczé, József Kolompár, Katalin Kovács, and Zsolt Zádori. Richard Hirschler edited the project case studies.

Chapter Six: The case study of Spain draws upon information compiled by Francisco Alvira Martin in Madrid, and Bronwyn Alsop in Washington.

OVERVIEW

Increasingly severe poverty among Roma in Central and Eastern Europe has been one of the most striking developments in the region since the transition from socialism began in 1989. While Roma have historically been among the poorest people in Europe, the extent of the collapse of their living conditions in the former socialist countries is unprecedented. While most Roma had jobs during the socialist era, formal unemployment and poverty among Roma communities is now widespread. The problem is a critical one. Because of higher birth rates, the relative size of the Roma population is increasing across the region. A minister of education in a leading European Union (EU) accession country recently noted that every third child entering school in his country is Roma. Policies to address Roma poverty therefore need to be an integral component of countries' economic and social development strategies.

Who Are the Roma?

Roma, or "gypsies," are a unique minority in Europe. Unlike other groups, they have no historical homeland and live in nearly all countries in Europe and Central Asia. The origins of Roma in Europe are widely debated. Historical records indicate that they migrated in waves from northern India into Europe between the ninth and fourteenth centuries. Roma are extremely diverse, with multiple subgroups based on language, history, religion, and occupations. While Roma in some countries are nomadic, most in Central and Eastern Europe have settled over time—some under Ottoman rule and others more recently under socialism.

Estimates of the size of the Roma population differ widely. Census data are intensely disputed, as many Roma do not identify themselves on such questionnaires. By most estimates the share of

Roma has grown to between 6 and 9 percent of the population in Bulgaria, FYR Macedonia, Romania, and the Slovak Republic. These shares are likely to increase in the near future because of high population growth among Roma and decreasing fertility among the majority populations. Romania has the highest absolute number of Roma in Europe—estimated at between 1 and 2 million. Large populations of between 400,000 and 1 million also live in Hungary, Bulgaria, the Slovak Republic, Turkey, and Serbia and Montenegro. Western Europe's largest Roma populations are found in Spain (estimated at 630,000), France (310,000), Germany (70,000), and Italy (130,000). In total, about 7 to 9 million Roma live in Europe—a population equal to that of Sweden or Austria.

Why has attention to Roma issues increased so sharply over the past decade? Political liberalization following the collapse of the iron curtain in 1989 allowed for increased international and domestic awareness of the situation of Roma, including emerging human rights violations and humanitarian concerns related to deteriorating socioeconomic conditions. National governments have a large stake in the welfare of Roma, for human rights and social justice concerns, but also for reasons of growth and competitiveness. In countries where Roma constitute a large and growing share of the working-age population, increasing marginalization of Roma in poverty and long-term unemployment threatens economic stability and social cohesion. Understanding the nature and determinants of Roma poverty, and taking policy action are thus important priorities.

Roma Poverty

Roma are the most prominent poverty risk group in many of the countries of Central and

Eastern Europe. They are poorer than other groups, more likely to fall into poverty, and more likely to remain poor. In some cases poverty rates for Roma are more than 10 times that of non-Roma. A recent survey found that nearly 80 percent of Roma in Romania and Bulgaria were living on less than \$4.30 per day (Figure 1). Even in Hungary, one of the most prosperous accession countries, 40 percent of Roma live below the poverty line.

Why Are Roma Poor?

For several interwoven reasons Roma poverty is rooted in their unfavorable starting point at the outset of the transition from planned to market economies. Low education levels and overrepresentation among low-skilled jobs led to disadvantages on the labor market, which are compounded by discrimination and low expectations of employers. Roma have thus had more difficulty re-entering the job market than other groups, and have become caught in a vicious circle of impoverishment. Additional barriers include a lack of access to credit and clear property ownership. These factors, combined with an overdependence on welfare, create a poverty trap that precludes many Roma from improving their living conditions or starting their own businesses. Persistent disadvantages in education, including low school attendance and overrepresentation in “special schools” intended for physically and mentally disabled children, make it highly proba-

ble that without policy interventions, the next generation of Roma will remain in poverty. Moreover, very few Roma are active in local or national politics, which mutes their political voice.

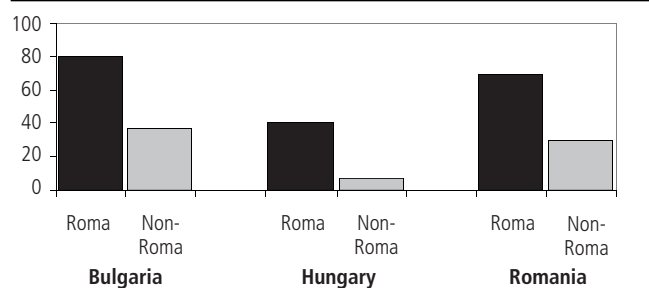
Access to social services in Eastern Europe’s transition period has been threatened by growing needs and tight fiscal constraints. These conditions have brought formal and informal charges for previously free services and eroding service quality. Roma are particularly hurt by increasing barriers to access because they are at a higher risk of poverty and are often geographically isolated.

Similarly, because Roma frequently live in settlements where property ownership is unclear, or in remote areas, they may lack the documentation necessary for enrolling in school and claiming social assistance or health benefits. The high prevalence of Roma in informal sector employment—such as petty trade and construction—also limits their access to benefits based on social insurance contributions, including health care and unemployment benefits.

Social and cultural factors also affect access and interactions with service providers. Because of language barriers, Roma may have difficulty communicating with teachers, understanding doctors, and maneuvering through local welfare offices. Poor communication and stubborn stereotypes of both Roma and non-Roma breed mistrust and reinforce preconceptions on both sides. Moreover, the overall absence of Roma personnel involved in policy design and delivery of public services means that few individuals can bridge between cultures.

Figure 1: Poverty Rates, 2000

(% of population below \$4.30 per day)*



* Adjusted to purchasing power parity (PPP) to allow for price comparisons across countries.

Sources: Yale dataset; Revenga et al. 2002.

Regional Context

Roma issues have gained increasing international attention over the past decade because of emerging evidence of human rights violations and seriously deteriorating socioeconomic conditions within many Roma communities. These developments have caught the attention of international organizations such as the UNDP, the Council of Europe, and the OSCE, as well as NGOs including the Open Society Institute, Save the Children, and UNICEF. Perhaps most significantly, Roma issues are now an integral part of the European Union accession process; in 1993

attention to Roma issues was adopted as part of the Copenhagen criteria for accession. At the international level, such Roma NGOs as the International Romani Union and the Roma National Congress have become increasingly active.

CONTEXT AND CONTENTS

The Role of the World Bank

In 2000 the World Bank published the first cross-country report on the poverty and human development challenges facing Roma in Central and Eastern Europe (Ringold 2000). Unlike prior analyses that had largely focused on questions of human rights, the Bank report addressed Roma issues from the perspective of economic and social development. This volume updates and expands that work, incorporating the findings of new surveys and publishing, for the first time, some of the background studies which were included in the 2000 report. Policy makers, the Roma and NGO community, and a wider audience interested in Roma issues to the 2000 study showed a strong interest in more detailed information on the conditions in Roma communities and policy responses.

This volume responds to that demand, but does not quench it. Surveys and case studies presented here are still incomplete. Further work is needed to examine the particular circumstances of Roma living in the countries of the former Yugoslavia, Albania, Moldova, Russia, and Ukraine, among others. Issues related to health, housing, and the situation of Roma women also need further attention. These gaps stem from the lack of information and measurement challenges. Despite the severity of Roma poverty, information on their living conditions and challenges is scarce, often unreliable, and frequently anecdotal. The analyses presented here are intended to fill these gaps—and to stimulate further action.

Contents

The chapters draw on both quantitative analyses of household surveys and qualitative, sociological case studies that document the experiences of Roma communities in different countries, focusing on Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary, and Slo-

vakia and drawing on examples from other countries. The first chapter provides background on Roma, their characteristics, and origins. It also discusses contrasting policy approaches that have shaped the position of Roma in Europe over time.

Chapter Two looks at the nature and characteristics of Roma poverty using quantitative data from household surveys—including a new cross-country household data set on Roma. It examines the correlates of Roma poverty including poor housing conditions, education, and health.

Chapters Three and Four report the results of detailed field studies by Central and East European sociologists on diverse Roma communities in Slovakia and Romania. These studies draw directly from interviews with Roma and non-Roma to provide a better understanding of the interrelated challenges Roma face in accessing markets and services. One of the strongest findings was that lack of access to public services and labor markets is compounded by the geographic isolation of some Roma settlements. Often, these isolated settlements originated from exclusionary policies of the past. Today the geographic isolation of Roma settlements limits access to education, health care, and waste collection, and thus increases poverty over the long run.

Other causes of Roma poverty are interrelated as well. For instance, Roma parents' choice to enroll their children in "special schools" intended for the mentally and physically disabled is sometimes driven by discrimination experienced by Roma in regular schools. Roma parents sometimes feel they are protecting their children by sending them to special needs schools with other Roma children, but the education they receive there ill prepares them for life, again exacerbating the risks of poverty and exclusion over the long term.

Finally, Chapters Five and Six look at the experience of projects in Hungary to compare the Central and East European experience with that of Spain, a West European country with a large Roma population. Chapter Five reports the results of a survey of Roma projects in Hungary and shows that, despite the proliferation of such projects after 1989, it remains difficult to evaluate their impact. Case studies of several projects

show several factors to be important, including the quality of project leadership, local economic conditions, and monitoring and evaluation.

Methods and Approach

This volume draws from both quantitative and qualitative methods in order to paint a fuller picture of the living conditions of Roma. Both approaches have distinctive benefits and drawbacks. Quantitative methods are useful in illustrating where Roma stand relative to non-Roma populations in individual countries and Roma populations elsewhere. On the other hand, data on Roma are notoriously unreliable and difficult to attain. Even basic population figures are subject to dispute. Since Roma often do not identify themselves as such, survey-based research has serious limitations. Still, quantitative data offers useful comparisons of welfare measures that can improve policy analysis and responses.

While quantitative research shows that Roma poverty is distinctive, it does not provide an adequate basis for understanding the particular dynamics that underlie Roma poverty. Here, qualitative research has the greatest impact. Qualitative research can identify social processes, mechanisms, and relations between variables that are difficult to discern by looking at numbers alone. For example, the empirical analysis presented in Chapter Two shows that much of the gap between Roma and non-Roma welfare is likely due to factors such as discrimination and exclusion, which cannot be assessed empirically. Therefore qualitative research provides a sharper picture of Roma living conditions in different communities, to emphasize the diversity of Roma populations and better understand interconnections between causes of poverty. Carefully constructed qualitative surveys conducted by Central and Eastern European researchers formed the primary source for this analysis. This qualitative research lets us hear how Roma perceive their poverty situation in their own words.

Qualitative research has drawbacks as well. It tends to provide a snapshot of a single area, emphasizing certain factors over others and with biases that may reflect observer concerns. However, a combination of quantitative and qualita-

tive analysis provides a complementary set of perspectives and a better starting point for analysis and policymaking.

THE ENVIRONMENT FOR POLICY DEVELOPMENT

Policies to ease Roma poverty need to be designed with three key factors in mind: (i) the multidimensional nature of Roma poverty and its interconnected roots; (ii) the diversity of Roma in Central and Eastern Europe; and (iii) the process of European integration.

Multidimensional and Interconnected Roots of Roma Poverty

The central insight of this study is that Roma poverty has multiple and interrelated causes. These tend to reinforce one another in a vicious cycle of poverty and exclusion, and require a multifaceted approach. Roma often have poor access to labor markets because of low education levels, geographic isolation, and discrimination. Low education levels result from constraints on both the supply and the demand side. Roma often face discrimination at school and feel that schools ignore Roma culture and language. In addition, Roma sometimes lack sufficient food or clothing to support school attendance. Thus, attitudes, experiences, and social conditions conspire to reduce Roma education levels and labor market performance. Because of these interconnected roots, one cannot adequately address Roma poverty by focusing on a single aspect. Rather, a comprehensive approach is needed.

An example from the case study material is instructive here. In several countries, researchers found that Roma poverty was caused in part by poor housing conditions. In many cases, this is because Roma were left out of the property and land privatization processes that took place during the early 1990s. Information was scarce about how to navigate the bureaucratic procedures for property ownership, and Roma were less likely than others to do it successfully. Hence, Roma today disproportionately live in unregistered dwellings, contributing to poverty in complex ways. According to one man interviewed in Kyjov, a segregated Roma settlement in the town of Stará Lubovňa,

Slovakia, “We built our house with a building permit, but there are still problems with the site, although it was officially given to us during socialism. But today the land is not ours, therefore we cannot install any water, gas, or sewage pipes.” This example shows that Roma poverty is rooted in incompatibilities between Roma social practices, dominant state behaviors and norms, limited political representation, and geographic exclusion. It also shows how Roma may have missed out on the benefits of economic reforms.

Diversity

While demonstrating the distinctive nature of Roma poverty, this volume also emphasizes the diversity of Roma populations in Central and Eastern Europe—ethnic, occupational, religious, and economic. The proportion speaking dialects of the Roma language differs greatly from country to country, as does the proportion living in cities, integrated neighborhoods, or segregated rural settlements. These differences have a major impact on welfare status. Efforts to create, define, or represent a single Roma community will similarly founder on the rocks of internal cultural diversity. Roma tend to have distinctive problems of integration and access, but the situation of different communities and individuals varies immensely and cannot be reduced to a single, simple set of answers or policy responses.

A study of nine Roma communities in Romania, included in the main report, illustrates this diversity. Each of the nine communities consists of different combinations of Roma subgroups, with different languages, religions, and occupations. The Zabrauti neighborhood of Bucharest contains a mosaic of Roma ethnic groups, varying from the quite traditional Sporitori, who speak the Roma language, to more integrated Roma who speak primarily, or only, Romanian. The urban community of Babadag has three main Roma groups, the largest of which is Muslim. However, in the rural community of Iana, most Roma are active Orthodox Christians. Other communities are relatively homogenous. One urban and one rural community studied in Romania consisted primarily of Hungarian-speaking Roma. Another rural community was populated

by relatively well-off Caldarari Roma, who speak the traditional Roma language, and work primarily in trade, after being laid off from a large state-owned enterprise. Such diversity complicates any approach to addressing Roma poverty, since the root causes may also differ dramatically.

The European Dimension

Policies for addressing Roma poverty also must be framed in the context of the Central and Eastern European countries’ drive for membership in the European Union. The timing of the publication of this volume and other reports on Roma are not coincidental. The accelerating process of European integration has focused attention on the Roma issue through the adoption and monitoring of the Copenhagen criteria for EU accession. Based on these criteria, the countries of Central and Eastern Europe have built institutions and legislative mechanisms to address Roma issues. However, this is only the beginning. Even once accession happens—as early as 2004 for some countries—addressing Roma poverty will require a long-term approach, as part of each country’s overall economic and social development program.

Interactions between Roma policy and the European accession process can be seen most vividly in Hungary—the first Central and East European country to apply for EU membership, and also the first to make a substantial policy effort to address Roma issues. Hungary passed a Minorities Act in 1993 that granted considerable cultural, educational, and linguistic rights to Hungary’s thirteen recognized minorities, including Roma. This Act created a system of national and local minority self-governments that let minorities initiate social, educational, and development projects. Approximately half of these are Roma self-governments.

Hungary has also established a national Office for National and Ethnic Minorities, an independent Minorities Ombudsman to oversee minority rights and protections, and a Roma Office under the Office of the Prime Minister to coordinate Roma policy across the government. Together, these offices enable Hungary to comply with EU norms, in part through the implementa-

tion of a “medium-term package” of measures aimed toward social inclusion of Roma. Hungary’s extensive experience with Roma institutions and projects provides an important example for other EU aspirants.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND APPROACHES

While the plight of Roma in Central and Eastern Europe has not gone unnoticed, many lessons still need to be drawn and new policy approaches pursued. During the past decade, numerous initiatives by governments, NGOs, and international organizations have been launched to address various aspects of the Roma issue, from combating human rights violations, to addressing racial stereotyping in the media, and promoting education and employment. The level of activity varies significantly across countries. As many of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe move toward becoming EU members, a more systemic policy-oriented approach is needed to address gaps in Roma economic and social development. Project lessons from the 1990s can be used to inform policy interventions in key areas such as education, health, social assistance, and the labor market.

Together, the multidimensional and inter-related roots of Roma poverty, the diversity of Roma communities, and the European background constitute a unique context for policy. This report makes several recommendations. First, a comprehensive policy approach is required to address multiple and interrelated causes of Roma poverty simultaneously. Second, primary emphasis needs to be placed on furthering the social inclusion of Roma in European societies. In identifying policy approaches, useful lessons can be drawn from other countries with similar experience. And finally, greater attention needs to be paid to policy implementation and evaluation and the central role of Roma themselves in these processes.

Links with Systemic Reform

Improving conditions for Roma are inherently linked to the overall success of each country’s economic and social development strategies. So each country must implement policies that promote

and sustain growth, while improving social welfare outcomes and the inclusiveness of policies for all populations. However, macro-level policies will not be sufficient to reach all Roma, so targeted interventions are needed to tackle unique problems of exclusion and ensure that Roma are able to work and participate fully in public services.

Related to this, better access to quality social services for Roma is linked to the overall effectiveness of the education, health, and social protection systems in each country. In many ways, the inherited systems were ill-suited to the reality of a market economy, and one way in which they have proven ineffective is their inability to reach all vulnerable groups, including Roma. Throughout the region, countries have embarked upon systemic reforms to improve the efficiency, equity, and relevance of public services. These measures are making a difference. Addressing systemic issues and improving access and quality of social services will improve conditions for the entire population. Again, these systemwide measures need to be accompanied by interventions designed to reach Roma.

Toward an Inclusive Approach

As Roma poverty is rooted in broad-based social exclusion—economic, social, and geographic—addressing it calls for an inclusive approach which would aim to expand and promote Roma involvement and participation in mainstream society, while maintaining cultural and social autonomy. Only policies that allow Roma to take advantage of opportunities in national and European labor and housing markets, education and health systems, and social and political networks have a chance of reducing poverty over the long term. Policy mechanisms would include those which make existing policies more accessible to Roma, and identifying areas where targeted initiatives which specifically reach Roma are needed. An emphasis on policies of inclusion would complement rights-based approaches by tackling the economic and social barriers which Roma face.

A central policy goal should be the multifaceted inclusion of Roma into institutions and mechanisms that create economic and social

opportunities. Emphasis should be placed on providing incentives, rather than forcing compliance. Interventions which reduce the isolation and exclusion of Roma can help improve living conditions over the longer term. An inclusive approach also needs to rely on greater participation of Roma in the projects and programs which affect them. A number of successful projects use Roma mentors as liaisons between Roma and non-Roma communities. For example, Roma teachers' assistants who work with parents, or peer advisors who assist with job placement, can facilitate integration while strengthening the Roma community itself.

Addressing exclusion and the wounds of segregation also involves overcoming divisions between Roma and non-Roma communities. This would build trust and help develop social capital within communities. Such measures need to involve both Roma and their non-Roma neighbors. In most cases, policies should target communities at large, rather than Roma in particular—although there may be exceptions where explicit attention to ethnicity would be appropriate, such as overcoming language barriers. Multicultural education and a curriculum which includes the history and culture of Roma and other minorities are critical vehicles for overcoming cultural barriers. Training teachers, local government officials, and other personnel working in social services can address discrimination within public services. Finally, public information campaigns can promote multiculturalism and raise awareness about discrimination.

Policies need to balance three related sets of objectives: first, increasing economic opportunities by expanding employment participation; second, building human capital through better education and health; and third, strengthening social capital and community development through increased empowerment and participation of Roma. In this vein, options include:

- Reducing segregation in housing, particularly by alleviating the problems associated with, or providing alternatives to, isolated rural settlements;
- Integrating Roma students into mainstream educational systems through pre-

school programs and provision of food, transportation, and clothing to enable attendance;

- Increasing outreach to Roma communities by social service providers, including health and social workers;
- Involving Roma as liaisons between communities and public services;
- Providing relevant job training and programs that increase Roma participation in formal labor markets.

Learning from Example

When considering future policy directions, a key source of ideas and experiences may be found in the policy experiences of other countries and regions in minority policies, particularly in the West. North and South America provide interesting counterpoints to Europe's experience, in part because the histories of African and indigenous peoples in the Americas offer more parallels to that of Roma than other national minorities in Europe. While all ethnic groups have distinct features, minority-majority relations share important similarities everywhere, and much can be learned from the policy experience of other countries which have confronted these issues over centuries.

What is distinctive about Roma in Europe is that they have endured centuries of exclusionary and assimilationist policies without being absorbed into majority societies. They remain stateless and have founded no movement for statehood because they lack a historic homeland. These general characteristics underline the challenges facing an integration-oriented approach to Roma poverty. However, they also focus attention on the stakes involved in getting policy right. Policymakers need to approach issues of Roma poverty from a long-term perspective, with a clear idea of objectives and tradeoffs.

Learning from Evaluation and Implementation

Development of a comprehensive national policy response to Roma poverty entails attention to monitoring and evaluation. The wealth of Roma projects in Central and Eastern Europe has

provided a great deal of experience in implementation. But very few initiatives have been evaluated or monitored, making it extremely difficult to identify lessons for future interventions. It is important to examine this body of experience to distill lessons for future work. Mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation should be built into new and ongoing initiatives. So should opportunities for exchanging information within and across countries.

A first step is increasing the availability and quality of information on Roma. To do this, countries need to examine their statistical instruments—for example, censuses and household surveys—and administrative data, to assess how they can better capture policy-relevant information on Roma and other minorities. Multilateral coordination, advice, and guidance can be important for ensuring comparability of data. More information on international practices, particularly in handling the privacy issue on ethnic identification, is needed. The outcomes of targeted public policies and NGO initiatives also require close monitoring, and program evaluations should be used for ongoing policy development. Mechanisms should be in place for disseminating lessons across regions and countries.

Privacy concerns about data collection must be respected. But up-to-date information is critical for policy makers to make decisions about program design and to monitor outcomes. Such data collection should benefit Roma in the long run through better designed and targeted interventions. Privacy concerns can be respected by making declarations of ethnicity voluntary and using periodic sample surveys, rather than national administrative data, to collect information on specific topics. Involvement of Roma groups in the development and implementation of surveys, as well as the analysis, is also extremely important. This was an emphasis of recent censuses in Slovakia and Bulgaria. Qualitative assessments can also provide valuable information for project design.

Building monitoring and evaluation mechanisms into projects and policies is vital. Monitoring should be an integral part of all projects to ensure accountability. Equally important are evaluations

to assess project impacts and outcomes. These require collection of baseline data at the outset of projects for comparison once they have been completed. For example, an intervention designed to improve school enrollments should measure enrollments prior to the project and assess whether participants stay in school during the project, as well as afterwards. The time horizon for outcome evaluation should also be enough to assess longer-term impacts. Again, in the case of education, the evaluation should assess not just whether children are in school at the end of the project, but what they have learned, whether they graduate and continue their education, and how the project affects their chances in higher education and the labor market.

Ensuring Participation

Regardless of whether programs and policies are explicitly designated for Roma, Roma participation is essential. The success of the inclusive approach outlined earlier rests on the ability of Roma to contribute to the development processes which affect them. The experience of policies and programs directed at Roma during both the socialist and transition periods showed that involvement of Roma in the design, implementation, and evaluation of programs is essential. The recent past is littered with projects and programs that, however well-intentioned, failed because they were designed and implemented without the involvement of the future beneficiaries.

Ensuring Roma involvement in policy and project development rests on the existence of effective mechanisms for participation. While Roma have been increasingly involved in civil society and various aspects of policymaking, significant challenges to ensuring effective communication and involvement remain. Some of these have been discussed in this volume, including low education levels and illiteracy which diminish the potential pool of Roma leaders and voters, and mistrust and prejudices between Roma and non-Roma. Continued expansion of opportunities for Roma to participate in civil society at the local and national levels is essential. So is non-Roma involvement. The example of Slovakia presented in Chapter Three, in particular,

Box 1: In Their Own Words

Interviews with Roma throughout the region highlight the range of experiences and living conditions, across and within countries. These snapshots illustrate this diversity. The challenges they face are explored further throughout this volume.

Education:

Many Roma children do not attend school. Some parents are unable to send their children to school because they lack basic supplies, or even clothes. Other children are excluded because of social and cultural factors, such as language.

We can't afford to send them to school in the winter. We have no sneakers, no proper shoes for snow. They can't go to school in slippers. They don't have jackets or warm clothes either. We can't afford anything—copybooks, pens... Children have no money for meals. That's why they don't go to school. —Parent, Bulgaria

Children from segregated Roma settlements do not master the Slovak language and do not understand their teachers. The teachers do not speak the Roma language, so they communicate by using gestures. —School Director, Slovakia.

While demand for education is low in some Roma communities, other parents expressed a strong interest in their children's education and recognized its importance for their future success.

My grandson is a first grade student. We sent him to kindergarten and hope in the future that he will put more importance on education than we did. —Grandparent, Slovakia.

I waited for my daughter to return from school every day and asked her what happened at school. I sat beside her when she was writing up her homework. I would not let her go out until I saw that she had finished. I would not allow anyone at home to touch her and make her do some other housework...I do not know what will happen to her after she completes her education, but whatever that is, it will be better. She can become a doctor, a teacher. She will go higher than us. —Parent, Bulgaria.

Employment:

Formal unemployment in some Roma settlements can reach 100 percent. Many Roma face severe obstacles in finding a job because of their low education and skill levels, as well as discrimination on the labor market.

Who is going to give me a job? I have no education, no skills and am Roma. Even in my neighboring village nobody wants to give us any work. —35-year-old father of five, Slovakia.

If his Bulgarian name is Angel or Ioan or Stoyan or Dragan, he'll get all the application forms and be asked to come in. As soon as they realize he's Gypsy, Roma, he's turned down, they lower their voices and tell him to come some other time. When your name is Bulgarian and they see you are a Gypsy, they throw you out! —Roma, Bulgaria.

Roma Identity:

In Hungary, experiments with alternative education for Roma high school students, which include Roma language, culture and history in the curriculum, have sparked interest in Roma identity among young people.

My grandmothers spoke the Roma language, and my parents can understand it. I do not speak the language, but I would very much like to learn it. —Student, Hungary

I would like to know more about the origin of my people and our values. —Student, Hungary

highlights the perils of separation and segregation. Roma who lack opportunities for interaction with wider society, including other Roma communities and non-Roma, are cut off from

society. Increasing contacts and partnerships between non-Roma and Roma will facilitate inclusion and address the mistrust and miscom-

munication that limit the progress of local and community development.

CONCLUSIONS

Poverty among Roma remains one of the most pressing issues for Central and Eastern European states as they move toward EU integration and sustained economic development. Using a variety of sources and approaches, this report examines the nature of Roma poverty—a multifaceted challenge that can only be addressed by a policy approach that attends to all dimensions of Roma social exclusion and focuses on the potential contributions Roma can make to social and economic development. Since the dominant policy approach in the years after socialism has tended to rely on a fragmented set of projects, often delivered by local NGOs with limited assistance from the state, the opportunity to make a differ-

ence through a comprehensive change of direction is significant and bright.

The current level of activity and interest in Roma issues in Central and Eastern Europe provides a promising start. The next step is to integrate the lessons of this experience into policy. The mechanisms to facilitate this have been put in place. Most Central and East European countries have formulated strategies for improving the conditions of Roma and established institutions to develop, coordinate, and administer policies and projects. However, the agenda is complex and improvements will not come overnight. Indeed, poverty among Roma communities in some West European countries highlights the scope of the challenge. Effective policy responses will require a multilayered approach involving cross-country partnerships among Roma and international organizations, national and local governments, NGOs and communities.

Chapter One: INTRODUCTION

Increasingly severe poverty and exclusion of Roma in Central and Eastern Europe has been one of the most striking developments in the region since the transition from socialism began in 1989. While Roma have historically been among the poorest people in Europe, the extent of the collapse of their living conditions in the former socialist countries is unprecedented. While most Roma had jobs during the socialist era, formal unemployment is now widespread. Even in countries which are set to join the European Union (EU) poverty is striking. Poverty rates for Roma range between four and ten times that of non-Roma in Bulgaria, Hungary and Romania. Because of higher birth rates, the relative size of the Roma population is increasing across the region.

As a result, addressing poverty among Roma is one of the most pressing development issues in Central and Eastern Europe, particularly as the countries move toward membership in the EU. While living standards have declined for many during the transition from socialism to market economies, conditions for Roma have deteriorated more severely than for others, and Roma have been poorly positioned to take advantage of emerging opportunities in the economy and society. Poverty among Roma is a complex and multidimensional phenomenon related to poor health and education status, limited chances in the labor market, discrimination, and unique aspects of Roma social organization, which together contribute to their social exclusion.

The multidimensional nature of Roma poverty and social exclusion raises three interrelated questions: What distinguishes Roma poverty from poverty among other groups in the transition countries of Central and Eastern Europe? How have countries in the region attempted to

address Roma poverty during the transition? What lessons have been learned, and how can these be applied in the future?

In answering these questions, this volume draws on quantitative analyses of household surveys and qualitative, sociological case studies which document the experiences of Roma communities in Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary, and Slovakia, and drawing examples from other countries. This approach is intended to provide a more nuanced picture of Roma poverty and its determinants, as well as of policy experience. Identifying the unique factors underlying Roma poverty helps to explain why the transition has been harder on Roma than others, and what interventions are needed to expand opportunities for Roma, within the context of economic and social development for the population as a whole.

This first chapter provides background on Roma in Central and Eastern Europe, their characteristics and origins. It also discusses contrasting policy approaches that have shaped the position of Roma in Europe over time. Chapter Two looks at the nature and characteristics of Roma poverty using quantitative data from household surveys—including a new cross-country dataset. It examines the correlates of Roma poverty, including housing conditions, educational, and health status.

Later country chapters on Slovakia, Romania, Hungary, and Spain explore aspects of Roma poverty through qualitative methods. Sociological field studies enrich the picture of living conditions in Roma communities. Case studies of Roma settlements in Slovakia highlight the relationship of Roma poverty to social exclusion. Chapter Four, on Romania, examines conditions in nine Roma communities and reveals substantial diversity in access to social services. Chapter

Five focuses on policy lessons, drawing from the case of Hungary, where more projects to address Roma issues have been undertaken than in any other country in Central and Eastern Europe.

Chapter Six, on Spain, provides a counterpoint to the case studies from Central and Eastern Europe, illustrating the commonalities and differences between Roma in East and West, while drawing lessons from policy. These lessons form the basis of the discussion of policy recommendations in the final chapter. Examples of programs and policies from other countries are included where possible. Together, these multiple approaches provide a striking picture of Roma poverty with policy implications for the future.

Who Are the Roma?

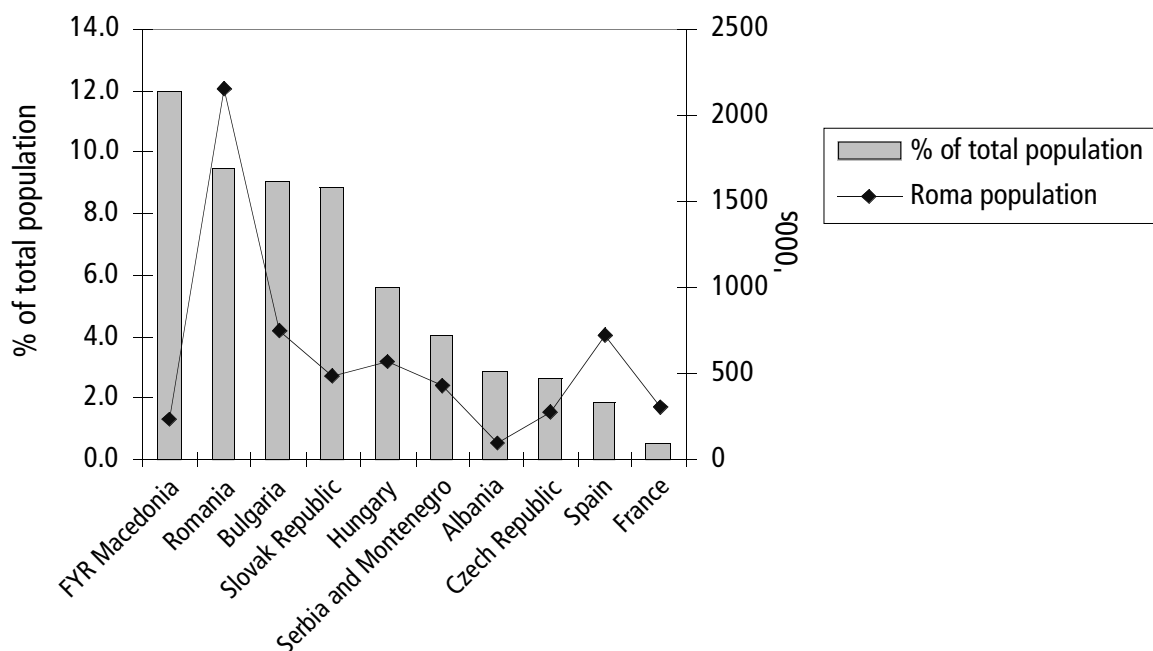
Roma, or “gypsies,” are a unique minority in Europe. They have no historical homeland but live in nearly all countries of Europe and Central Asia. The roots of the Roma are widely debated. Historical records indicate that they migrated in waves from northern India into Europe between

the ninth and fourteenth centuries. Roma constitute an extremely diverse minority, with multiple subgroups based on linguistic, historical, and occupational distinctions. While some Roma groups are nomadic, the vast majority of Roma in Central and Eastern Europe have settled—some during the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman empires, others under socialism.

Estimates of the size of the Roma population in Europe range from 7 to 9 million, similar to the total population of many smaller European states. Approximately 70 percent of Roma in Europe live in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, and nearly 80 percent of this population live in countries that have been invited to join the European Union in 2004 or are in accession negotiations.¹ Roma are estimated to make up between 6 and 11 percent of the populations of Bulgaria, FYR Macedonia, Romania, and the Slovak Republic (Figure 1.1).

Why has attention to Roma issues increased so sharply over the past decade? The fall of the iron curtain in 1989 allowed for increased internation-

Figure 1.1: Estimated Roma Populations in Central and Eastern Europe



Sources: Wheeler (1999); Liegeois (1994). Total population data: World Bank Atlas (1995).

al awareness. Subsequently, concern over human rights violations and seriously deteriorating socioeconomic conditions for Roma gained attention from international organizations and international NGOs, such as the Council of Europe, the OSCE, various UN agencies, the Soros Foundation, and the Western news media. Many international organizations have issued major reports on Roma issues in recent years, including a recent Human Development Report on Roma by the UNDP.² Most significantly, attention to the rights and living conditions of Roma have become part of the EU accession process, as Roma issues are included in the political criteria for accession.

Paying attention to Roma issues is squarely in the interest of national governments. The severe deterioration of living standards has raised humanitarian concerns and called attention to human rights issues. Countries also cannot ignore the growth of Roma long-term unemployment and poverty, which will undermine competitiveness over the longer term. In countries where Roma constitute a large and growing share of the working-age population, their increasing marginalization threatens stability and social cohesion. It has become a priority to understand how Roma poverty differs from poverty generally in the transition countries, in order to overcome it.

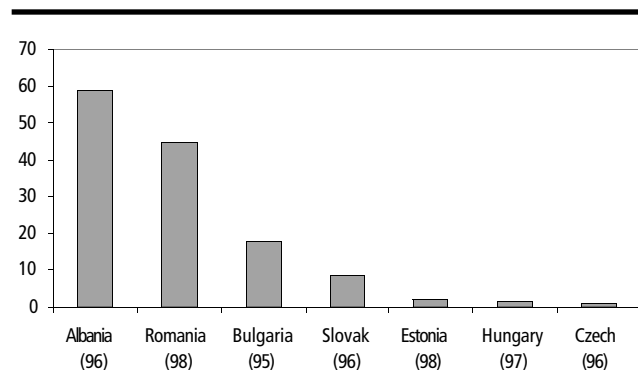
Poverty in Transition

Changes in the socioeconomic status of Roma in Central and Eastern Europe over the past decade are closely linked to the effects of economic transition. The shift from planned to market economies has led to an increase in poverty and lower living standards across the region.³ However, regional figures mask considerable diversity across and within countries. Poverty in the leading EU accession countries, including the Czech and Slovak Republics and Hungary—remains substantially lower than in the poorer countries of the region—such as Romania and Bulgaria (Figure 1.2). This due to many factors, including the slower pace of economic reforms in the latter two countries in the early 1990s (World Bank 2000b).

Deep pockets of poverty distinguish the profile of poverty in many of the leading accession

Figure 1.2: Poverty Rates in Selected Transition Countries

(% living under \$4.30 PPP* per day)



Notes: Poverty line adjusted using purchasing power parity (PPP) for comparisons across countries. Household surveys differ across countries, refer to source for details.

* PPP= purchasing power parity

Source: World Bank 2000b.

countries. Even in the more prosperous countries, significant poverty persists within some segments of the population. In the transition countries of Central and Eastern Europe, the unemployed, the poorly educated, those living in rural areas, and children are more likely to be poor. In Slovakia in 1996, while the national poverty rate was 10 percent—low by regional standards—the poverty rate for those with primary education, or lower, was 40 percent higher than the national average, at 14 percent (World Bank 2001b). Even worse, poverty rates for households headed by an unemployed person were nearly four-and-a-half times the national average. Roma represent one of the main poverty groups. They are both poorer than other population groups and more likely to fall into poverty and remain poor. Poverty therefore has a substantial ethnic dimension.⁴

HISTORY

The roots of Roma in Europe have long been a subject of mystery and controversy. According to records, Roma arrived in Europe from northern India, although the reasons for their migration are unknown. Linguistic evidence and the limited documentation suggest that Roma came first through Persia and the Caucasus, through the

Byzantine Empire, into southern Europe (Fraser 1995), although some Macedonian legends place Roma in Europe at the time of Alexander the Great as early as the fourth century B.C. The first detailed references to Roma in Central and Eastern Europe are found in twelfth century records from the Dalmatian Coast and Hungary—now the Slovak Republic (Crowe 1994).

The subsequent history of Roma in Europe is as varied as the countries to which they migrated. However, marginalization and discrimination have been common (Bárány 2002). During their first centuries in Europe, Roma were valued for their skills in metalworking, armaments and music. They were also subject to prejudice and persecution. As early as the fifteenth century, Roma were traded as slaves in the principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia (currently Romania). Draconian anti-Roma policies were adopted throughout Europe. A scholar on Roma notes that “[h]ad all the anti-Gypsy laws which sprang up been enforced uncompromisingly, even for a few months, the Gypsies would have been eradicated from most of Christian Europe well before the middle of the sixteenth century” (Fraser 1995).

In Central and Eastern Europe, the policies of the Austrian Empire, the Hungarian Kingdom, and the Ottoman Empire had a significant role in shaping Roma communities. Under Empress Maria Theresa, in the latter half of the eighteenth century, Habsburg policies aimed to eliminate the Roma’s nomadic lifestyle and encourage assimilation. While these restrictions were loosened with the end of Maria Theresa’s reign, they were the first step toward the settling of Roma—a feature that still distinguishes Roma in Central and Eastern Europe from those living in Western Europe. Policies toward Roma under the Ottoman Empire were on the whole more relaxed, and mostly allowed for free movement across borders, despite occasional attempts at forced settlement, including an initiative against Serbian Roma in the 1630s (Fraser 1995).

The Nazi era marked the darkest period of Roma history. Like Jews, Roma were targeted with discriminatory legislation and subsequently extermination. During the course of the “Devouring,” as Roma call the Holocaust, approximately

half a million Roma from across Europe were executed or killed in concentration camps. The largest population losses were among Roma from Yugoslavia, Romania, Poland, the USSR, and Hungary (Fraser 1995; Lewy 2000).

The Socialist Period

Soviet bloc policies adopted toward Roma in Central and Eastern Europe left a legacy that affects the socioeconomic status of Roma today. Although the extent varied, socialist governments made a concerted effort to assimilate Roma and minimize ethnic differences. Communist parties issued decrees and adopted policies that aimed at socioeconomic integration by providing housing and jobs for Roma.

These measures were frequently culturally repressive, though their stringency varied. Among the most repressive campaigns were movements in Czechoslovakia and Bulgaria that sought to erase ethnic divisions completely. In contrast, in socialist Yugoslavia, Roma were granted official nationality status in 1981 (Poulton 1991).

In Czechoslovakia in 1958, the government proclaimed that Roma were not a separate ethnic group and embarked upon a violent campaign against nomadism. The regime planned a “dispersal and transfer” scheme to resettle Roma from areas with large Roma communities in eastern Slovakia to the Czech lands. But this program was never fully implemented, and conditions were relaxed somewhat during the period of “Prague Spring” reforms of 1968. During this time, Roma language teaching was introduced in schools. However, assimilation programs were imposed with new vigor following the Soviet crackdown on the reformists (Fraser 1995).

In Bulgaria, all ethnic minorities—including Bulgarian Turks and Roma—were targeted with “Bulgarization,” as the regime attempted to suppress cultural identities through forced assimilation. Minorities were forced to change their names to Bulgarian names and could lose access to social services for not complying. In Romania, President Ceaucescu mounted an aggressive “systematization” program across the country in the 1980s, resettling entire villages and urban neighborhoods. While the campaign was not

explicitly targeted at Roma, both Roma and non-Roma settlements were destroyed (Crowe 1994).

Assimilation efforts under socialism transformed the Roma. Policies forced Roma into the mainstream economy by providing employment, housing, and education. The impact of these efforts was mixed. In education major strides were made in enrolling children in schools. In Czechoslovakia, a campaign increased kindergarten enrollment rates for Roma—from 10 percent in the early 1970s to 59 percent by 1980. At the same time, the share of Roma finishing compulsory education rose from 17 to 26 percent, and literacy rates rose to 90 percent among adults. In Poland, an education initiative enrolled 80 percent of Roma children in the late 1960s. Some school-promotion initiatives, such as a Hungarian effort in the late 1980s, attempted to increase Roma school attendance by experimenting with Roma-language teaching (Fraser 1995).

However, these gains were tempered. In many cases, socialist education policies helped only to perpetuate earlier inequities. In the push to increase enrollments, Roma were often channeled into segregated schools intended for children with mental and physical disabilities. For example, the education campaign initiated in Hungary in the 1960s focused on creating “special classes...within the national school system for retarded or difficult children” (Crowe 1994). A disproportionate number of Roma were enrolled in special classes and schools. Similar practices were followed in other countries, including Czechoslovakia and Bulgaria. The practice of pushing Roma into special schools has continued following the transition.

Employment programs were also a mixed blessing. Some attempted to formalize traditional Roma trades. For example, the Polish government set up cooperative workshops to support traditional crafts, such as coppersmithing. However, these low-paying and physically difficult jobs were in less demand and did not attract Roma workers (Fraser 1995). Because of their low education levels and skills, Roma were often employed instead in state-owned enterprises and on collective farms, frequently in the most onerous, unskilled positions. A 1995 study of the Hun-

garian labor force found that half of Roma workers were unskilled, in comparison with 12 percent of the Hungarian population (Crowe 1994).

As a whole, socialist policies did improve conditions for Roma by increasing access to education, employment, and housing. However, these initiatives also created new divisions between Roma and the state. The forced and often repressive assimilation campaigns fomented mistrust and tensions between Roma and service providers. This strain was further reinforced by the absence of participatory processes, authentic self-government, and Roma involvement in policy development and implementation. Paternalistic state provision of “cradle to grave” jobs, housing, and other benefits also created a culture of dependency. The transition, employment losses, and growing poverty have left many Roma, as well as others, feeling abandoned and alienated.

ROMA IN THE TRANSITION PERIOD

The transition to democracy and market economies has presented new challenges to Roma in Central and Eastern Europe. On the one hand, Roma have greater opportunities to organize politically and express themselves culturally; on the other they have also proven more vulnerable than other groups. There are four broad sets of reasons for this.

First, as Roma generally have less education and skills than others, they have had difficulty competing for jobs in the new market economies. Roma were often the first laid off from state-owned industrial factories, mines, and agricultural cooperatives. As a result, they face significant hurdles to labor market reentry, and have depended instead on poorly funded public assistance, insecure jobs in the informal sector, or work abroad.

Second, the transformation exacerbated numerous social problems facing Roma, including low educational and health status. Third, the transition has had a profound impact on Roma housing. Roma were historically not landowners. As a result, they have generally not benefited from land restitution and privatization policies. Fiscal constraints during transition have meant fewer state resources for maintaining the public

housing in which many Roma live. Finally, political transformation has been accompanied by rising discrimination and violence against ethnic minorities, including Roma.

Addressing Roma poverty is therefore a multifaceted problem, related to a complex mix of historical, economic, and social factors. Although other vulnerable groups in the region face similar circumstances, given the lack of social capital among some Roma communities and the added barrier of discrimination, the challenges loom large. Aspects of Roma culture and living conditions also reinforce stereotypes by limiting communication between Roma and non-Roma and contributing to a vicious circle of isolation and marginalization.

Moreover, access to social services has been threatened by an increasing need for services and tight budgets. Formal and informal charges now accompany previously free services, as does eroding quality. Roma are particularly affected by increasing barriers to access because they are at a higher risk of poverty and face unique circumstances that limit their access to services. Geographically isolated Roma communities may lie far from social service facilities and personnel. Similarly, because Roma frequently live in remote areas or illegal housing, they may lack the documentation necessary for enrolling in school and claiming social assistance or health benefits. The prevalence of Roma in informal sector employment also limits their benefits based on social insurance contributions, including health care and unemployment benefits.

Political liberalization has also proven a mixed blessing. The transition brought new opportunities for ethnic minorities to express their identity and participate in society. In most countries, minorities were once again recognized as distinct ethnic groups. For example, in Czechoslovakia, the new Declaration of Basic Human Rights and Freedoms adopted by the Federal Assembly in January 1991 allowed for free determination of ethnic identity. Roma political parties emerged in some countries, as did a range of Roma NGOs. However, the transition also brought new civic challenges and hardships. Political liberalization let extremist parties onto the political scene and opened other avenues

for public expression of hatred against Roma. Anti-Roma violence has been documented in the 1990s in all of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. Hence, designing and implementing programs to address the exclusion of Roma requires attention to the unique issues of diversity, culture, and social exclusion.

ROMA DIVERSITY, CULTURE, AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION

Diversity

A defining characteristic of Roma is their diversity. Researchers refer to a “kaleidoscope” and “mosaic” of Roma groups (Liegeois 1994; Fraser 1995), with numerous cross-cutting subgroups, including family clans and religion. Many Roma groups have little or no contact with each other. Because of their varied history in Asia and Europe, Roma also participate in many different religions. There are Roma of different Christian denominations, as well as Muslim Roma. In Bulgaria, Roma have traditionally been Eastern Orthodox or Muslim, although in recent decades many have begun to attend Protestant and Pentecostal churches (Iliev 1999). There are also geographic and historical groups, such as the *Slovensko Roma* from Slovenia, and subgroups based upon occupational categories, including former cauldron makers (*Kalderashi*) in Bulgaria and Romania, bear trainers (*Ursari*) and basket makers (*Kosnicari*) in Bulgaria.

Roma may have multiple affiliations, such as with an extended family group, as well as a geographic and occupational subgroup (Liegeois 1994). The densest concentration of different Roma communities is found in Southeastern Europe, where there is greater variation in religious affiliation, dialect, and occupation (Fraser 1995). The degree of assimilation also varies notably across subgroups, depending on “the amount of time they have lived...in the proximity of the dominant population, the size of the Gypsy community, familiarity with the majority language, the presence of (an)other...strong minority, and the history of interethnic relations” (Bárány 2002). In Hungary, the most integrated are the *Romungro* Roma, who speak Hungarian.

Use of the Roma language still prevails among some Roma communities, and there are numerous dialects. In Bulgaria half of the Roma speak the Roma language at home.⁵ In the Slovak Republic and Hungary, much less of the population does so. However, in both countries, language barriers have been found to limit the school participation and performance of some children (Ministry of Labor 1997; Radó 1997).

The diversity of Roma creates significant challenges for researchers. Information on Roma living conditions and poverty is scarce, fragmented, and often anecdotal. In addition to the difficulty of drawing generalizations about such a diverse group, measurement challenges include under-sampling in censuses and household surveys; privacy legislation in many countries which prohibit data collection by ethnicity; and the reluctance of many Roma to identify themselves as such.

Culture

Given the striking diversity of Roma communities, generalizing about the nature and characteristics of Roma culture is extremely difficult. The literature paints a fragmented and sometimes contradictory picture. However, it is clear that aspects of Roma social organization and values affect the interactions of Roma and non-Roma, the dynamics among Roma subgroups, and many aspects of their welfare. Cultural factors can influence the level of integration of communities, participation in civil society and political institutions, demand for public services, and household behavior.

Despite the complexity of the topic, there is consensus concerning the importance of the relationship between Roma and the “gadje,” the Roma word for non-Roma. Roma define themselves as distinct and different from gadje. This helps explain how Roma have maintained a separate identity across centuries, despite repeated pressures for integration:

Their ethnicity was to be fashioned and remoulded by a multitude of influences, internal and external, they would assimilate innumerable elements which had nothing to do with India, and they would eventually cease to be, in any meaningful

way, Indians; their identity, their culture would, however—regardless of all the transformations—remain sharply distinct from that of the gadze [sic] who surrounded them, and on whom their economic existence depended (Fraser 1995).

This distinction continues to influence Roma integration, participation in civil society and use of public services. To varying degrees, Roma communities have remained insular and separate. While some Roma communities have integrated, more traditional Roma communities and extended families are close knit, providing both security and protection from the outside world (Wheeler 1999). This division between the Roma and gadje worlds has reinforced stereotypes and mistrust on both sides. Roma may be reluctant to send their children to state schools because of fear of losing their cultural identity. This concern likely influences other aspects of life, including employment preferences and use of health services. The distance between Roma and non-Roma communities breeds mistrust and misunderstanding among non-Roma and reinforces negative stereotypes and discrimination.

The socially heterogeneous nature of Roma society also influences the level of integration of various Roma communities, their political participation, and relations among different Roma groups. For example, traditional Roma groups may distrust or reject more integrated Roma. In Hungary, the more traditional *Vlach* Roma have few interactions with the *Romungros* Roma, and in Bulgaria the *Kalderashi* relate little to the poorer *Ierlii*, whom they believe have abandoned their traditions (Stewart 1997; Iliev 1999). Little is known about the complex hierarchy among Roma groups, which is based not only on their adherence to Roma traditions but also to the prestige of clans and occupational groups, religion, and other divisions. These factors may correlate strongly with poverty and social exclusion.

Social Exclusion and Discrimination

A defining aspect of poverty among Roma is its relationship to social exclusion. Social exclusion and discrimination severely affects Roma

access to employment opportunities, education, and public services. Social exclusion refers to a process of social separation between individuals and society (Rodgers et al. 1995; Silver 1994). Exclusion can have multiple dimensions, including economic, political, sociocultural, and geographic (Baker 2001). In economic exclusion, individuals cannot participate in market activity, including employment, access to credit, and land. Political exclusion refers to limitations on participation in democratic processes, such as voting, participation in political parties and other associations within civil society. Sociocultural exclusion encompasses separation based upon linguistic, religious, and ethnic grounds. Geographic exclusion involves various types of spatial differentiation. Moreover, different facets of exclusion often reinforce each other. For example, geographic exclusion in housing can lead to economic exclusion if people are unable to find jobs where they live or attend mainstream public schools there.

For Roma, social exclusion from majority societies in Europe has mainly taken the form of ethnic discrimination. Roma have been shunned throughout European history, and ethnic tensions have intensified in the transition period with the revival of nationalism in some countries. Discrimination, both explicit and implicit, permeates many aspects of life, including education, employment, and housing. Roma have been barred from restaurants and hotels in Central and Eastern Europe. Documented racial violence, including skinhead attacks and police violence, has also been on the rise during the transition period.⁶

Stereotypes of Roma continue to be widespread throughout Central and Eastern Europe. UNDP Human Development Reports for Bulgaria and the Slovak Republic quoted opinion surveys that found deeply negative perceptions of Roma to be pervasive. In Bulgaria, nearly 80 percent of the population surveyed in 1999 said that they would not want to have Roma as neighbors, a figure far higher than for any other ethnic or social group, including former prisoners (UNDP 1999). Similar results have been reported from surveys in other countries in the region.

The roots of such sentiments are difficult to trace but undoubtedly stem from a combination of factors, including history, difficult economic conditions, and feelings of social insecurity. As mentioned earlier, aspects of Roma culture and living conditions have reinforced stereotypes and spurred marginalization. Self-exclusion of some Roma can breed misunderstanding and mistrust among non-Roma. Similarly, the poverty of many Roma communities contributes to resentment as Roma are perceived as dependent on welfare benefits and burdens on the state.

POLICY APPROACHES AND DEBATES

European states' policies toward Roma historically have either aimed to further exclude Roma from majority societies—through expulsion, forced ghettoization, and denial of services—or to fully assimilate Roma into the majority society, often through coercive measures. Policies of exclusion and forced assimilation, though different in many ways, share one important goal: both seek to reduce the visibility of Roma communities—on the one hand by forcing them to the margins of society, on the other by forcing them to assimilate. Both deny Roma communities and individuals the right their own culture.

While the legacy of exclusionary and assimilationist policies lives on in Europe, current policy approaches to Roma are built on different foundations, emphasizing individual and group rights for ethnic minorities. This section discusses historic and current policy approaches toward Roma within a conceptual framework that helps to understand the influences and trends that shape current policy development.

Roma Policy: Four Approaches

Policy approaches taken by European governments in modern times fall into four broad groups: policies of exclusion, assimilation, integration, and minority rights (see Marko 2000 for a similar typology). These approaches reflect different responses to two basic questions about Roma policy: whether Roma should be treated as a distinct group or as individual members of a broader society and whether Roma policy should be pursued through coercive measures or with

Table 1.1: A Typology of Roma Policy Approaches in Europe

	Coercive	Rights-Based
Roma Treated as a Separate Group	Exclusion	Minority Rights
Roma Treated as Individual Members of Broader Society	Assimilation	Integration

respect for Roma rights. Table 1.1 shows that these policy approaches reflect different answers to these fundamental questions.

In this discussion, Roma policy refers to both explicit governmental policies toward Roma, as well as other state policies that affect Roma together with other social groups but may have a different effect on Roma. In addition, this discussion also considers how official state policies set the tone for the unofficial attitudes of non-state organizations, enterprises, and associations whose practices toward Roma also relate to their social status and poverty. As with any typology, these definitions are ideal types; some policies will not fit neatly into one or another of these categories, and some may be explicitly geared at blurring lines of distinction. Nonetheless, this typology captures the broad logic of policies toward Roma in Europe over time and reflects enduring differences in how societies address Roma issues.

Policies of Exclusion

As noted above, exclusion of Roma from majority societies in Europe results partly from beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors of Roma themselves. However, this self-marginalization is related to a long legacy of European policies that sought to reinforce Roma exclusion. Policies of exclusion seek to exclude Roma from the majority society along economic, political, sociocultural, and geographic dimensions.

Why have European governments often sought to exclude Roma? The rationale is usually based on a racial and nationalist perspective that holds Roma to be inferior and separate from the majority. Contact and intermarriage between Roma and the majority community is seen as harmful. Exclusionary policies are usually enact-

ed to protect the majority from perceived threats and are often pursued coercively. Lack of regard for Roma rights and interests is justified by the view that Roma are not members of the majority community but rather dangerous parasites. Therefore, the majority community has no obligation to concern itself with the welfare of Roma individuals or communities. While policies that reinforce social exclusion are widely rejected in international law today, their legacies persist.

One of the most important of these legacies is housing segregation—a form of geographic exclusion. Sociocultural exclusion of Roma in Europe has long been underpinned by housing policies shunting many Roma into separate settlements or ghettos. Under the Ottoman empire, urban neighborhoods, or *mahalas*, were organized along religious and ethnic lines. As a result, many Roma neighborhoods in the Balkans—such as the large Roma enclave of Suto Ozari, in Skopje, FYR Macedonia—have their roots in longstanding policy legacies. In Slovakia, policies enacted during and after World War II forced Roma to settle on the outskirts of towns, leading to the creation of a large number of Roma settlements. Roma also live in ghettos on the outskirts of cities in Western European countries such as Italy (European Roma Rights Center 2000).

More recent policies in Central and East European countries have—both directly and indirectly—led to continued geographic marginalization. In one notorious case, Czech authorities erected a wall around a Roma settlement in the town of Usti nad Labem. The wall was later torn down after protests from Roma, the international community, and Czech political leaders. As the study of Slovakia shows in Chapter Three, geographic exclusion of Roma powerfully reinforces social

exclusion of other kinds, including access to employment and state services.

Beyond geographic exclusion, current policies at the national and local levels continue to exclude Roma from public services, such as health and education. Such policies may have a critical impact on Roma poverty. The OSCE has documented extensive evidence of continued discrimination in the justice system, housing, education, and other areas (OSCE 2000; OSCE ODIHR 1997). Roma children often are excluded from education in mainstream public schools in Central and Eastern Europe and instead relegated to schools for the mentally handicapped.

Roma in Central and Eastern Europe also have been stripped of fundamental political rights, including citizenship. A notorious law enacted after the division of Czechoslovakia forced non-Czech citizens to reapply for Czech citizenship including provisions that prevented many Roma originally from Slovakia from winning Czech citizenship (Orentlicher 1998). Lack of citizenship can prevent people from acquiring property, voting, working, and receiving education, health care, and social assistance. Political rights are also important for allowing Roma to assert their economic interests.

Economic exclusion of Roma in Central and Eastern Europe often results not from official state policy but from the actions of other actors, particularly businesses and social associations. Many firms in the transition countries do not hire Roma, compounding the labor market woes of a population with low skills and education levels. Governments may foster employment discrimination by not acting effectively to prevent it.

Other acts of exclusion toward Roma are similarly outside the direct control of the state—such as barring Roma from restaurants and clubs, skin-head attacks, and the portrayal of Roma by the press as “the most problematic section of the population, disturbers of the social order” (PER 1997b). In these areas too, governments’ failure to take firm action can reinforce exclusionary social practices by signaling their acceptability.

Such signaling almost undoubtedly occurs through the expression of anti-Roma sentiment by state officials in public. As Save the Children

found, “There are few, if any, other population groups in Europe against which regular racist pronouncements and actions still pass largely unremarked” (Save the Children 2001a; OSI 2001). Such outbursts rarely cost the officials their jobs. Reinforcement of exclusionary norms by public officials are an unofficial policy of exclusion.

Policies of Forced Assimilation

Unlike exclusionary policies, policies of forced assimilation aim to eradicate differences between Roma and non-Roma, by making Roma adopt the norms, values, and behaviors of the mainstream.

Like policies of exclusion, assimilationist policies are by definition coercive. However, assimilationist policies tend to be undertaken not to harm Roma but to help them. Assimilationist logic asserts the benefits of belonging to the majority culture and participating in economic life, and takes the view that all individuals would be better off if they were elevated to full membership of this culture. Assimilation is often conceived as a “civilizing mission,” helping marginal or outside groups win greater prosperity and culture. Opponents of assimilation argue that assimilation often entails repression, losses to minority groups and cultures, and disproportionate benefits to the majority group. However, assimilated individuals are often granted nearly full rights in the majority society.

Assimilationist policies have been common in Europe for centuries. An assimilationist policy approach was adopted by the Austrian Empire and Hungarian Kingdom under the modernizing rule of Empress Maria-Theresa (Bárány 2002). Maria-Theresa issued four “Gypsy decrees” between 1758 and 1773 that “ordered all Gypsies to settle, pay taxes, and do mandatory service to churches and landowners... prohibited their leaving the villages to which they were assigned without permission... mandated compulsory military service... eliminated the authority of Romani leaders over their communities, banned traditional Gypsy dress and the usage of Romani language... forbade marriages between Gypsies and ordered Roma children over age five to be taken away to state schools and foster homes”

(Bárány 2002). Maria-Theresa did not shy away from coercive measures to promote assimilation.

Assimilation was also the predominant Roma policy of socialist regimes in Europe after the Second World War. Following the lead of Karl Marx, socialist regimes believed in advancing “common interests of the entire proletariat, independently of all nationality” (Marx 1985). In practice, this meant promoting cooperation between different ethnic groups and nationalities, with the goal of forging an undivided, classless socialist society. Policy toward Roma was therefore guided by an effort to merge the population into the proletarian mainstream.

Thus in the 1950s and 1960s, most socialist regimes in Europe engaged in a strong, multi-pronged policy initiative to assimilate Roma (Ulč 1991). “The fundamental goal was to assimilate them and transform them into productive, cooperative, and supportive socialist citizens” (Bárány 2002). This was to be achieved through improved housing, higher educational enrollment, and guaranteed employment. Many of these policies, however, were pursued with a heavy hand. Settlements were broken up, housing was assigned, and work was made mandatory under threat of imprisonment. Roma generally were not given the opportunity to participate in decisionmaking or in the administration of these policies (Bárány 2002).

Neither policies of exclusion nor policies of forced assimilation allow room for individual choice, or individual rights. They are often pursued, at least in part, through official coercion. However, with the rise of a liberal democratic international order during the latter half of the twentieth century, both of these models of minority policy began to be discredited, at least in the eyes of international law and organizations such as the UN, OSCE, and EU (Wippman 1998). These trends opened the way for two rights-based policy approaches to emerge: policies of integration and minority rights.

Policies of Integration

Policies of integration and minority rights differ on whether rights are accorded primarily to individuals or groups. Policies of integration focus on bringing individuals into society as full

members. In these approaches, Roma individuals retain their cultural identity while adopting much of the lifestyle and practices of the dominant society.

Critics of integration warn that it shares the flaws of assimilation, since both approaches aim to subsume Roma in the broader society and to downplay the importance of ethnicity. However, policies of integration genuinely differ from those of assimilation. They are inspired by modern, liberal values that “favor broad political participation of all those within the geographic boundaries of a given state, regardless of their ethnic identity” (Wippman 1998). Integration policies also typically respect individual rights and individual choices about how to integrate, leaving room for continued ethnic identification. Assimilation policies do not.

Integration policies seek to integrate Roma, without coercion, into the majority society while protecting their individual rights. As Pace expresses it, “[a]ssimilation refers to the absorption of a minority group into the host or majority society, with consequent dissolution of the cultural features of the group...Integration means that an ethnic group tries to maintain some or all of its cultural characteristics, while seeking to minimize the practical problems inherent in adapting to the dominant society” (Pace 1993).

Philosophically, integration policies are based on a belief in progress, individual rights, and equal opportunity. Proponents of integration tend to believe that modern society is better than traditional society, providing forms of human development unavailable in the past. Members of more traditional groups, such as Roma, can benefit from integration if it facilitates individual growth and well-being. Proponents of integration also argue that no individual should be discriminated against, and that all individuals should be allowed to progress in society to the best of their abilities.

Integration has been the dominant European policy paradigm toward ethnic minorities since the 1970s (PER 1997a), except in the former socialist states. It has also been the dominant paradigm in international law (Wippman 1998). Some examples include integrating Roma into

regular school systems, banning labor market discrimination, increasing access to social services, addressing housing discrimination, and reducing ghettoization. All these policies seek to provide individuals with equal rights and the same opportunities as members of the dominant society.

Minority Rights Policies

Starting in the 1990s, European and international policies toward minorities have increasingly emphasized group rights (Wippman 1998; Pejic 1997; PER 1997a; Save the Children 2001b). This reflects “a growing acceptance of the legitimacy of group consciousness” in Europe—and, indeed, the world (Basurto 1995). This minority rights approach differs from the integration approach, since it advocates the establishment and protection of group, rather than individual, rights as the basis of minority policy.

The minority rights approach stresses the importance of cultural preservation as a means of improving the condition of minority groups. Minority rights advocates suggest that the situation of socially marginalized groups, such as Roma, will not be improved simply by integrating individuals into the majority society. Instead, their welfare will be secured best by enhancing opportunities for group empowerment and cultural self-determination.

The last two decades have seen a growing international concern for the rights of minorities in Europe. Intergovernmental organizations such as the OSCE, EU, and the Council of Europe have taken a particularly active role in establishing minority rights. The result is an emerging “common European standard” for minority policy, grounded primarily in international commitments undertaken by European states (De Witte 2002). These include the *European Convention on Human Rights*,⁷ the *Copenhagen Document* (1990),⁸ the *Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities* (1995),⁹ and the new EC Treaty article 13, established within the Amsterdam Treaty (1997, the first treaty provision to explicitly include antidiscrimination measures relating to ethnic minorities), and the *EU Charter on Fundamental Rights* (2000).¹⁰

On the basis of these emerging European standards, the 1993 Copenhagen Summit of the European Commission included “respect for minorities” as one political criterion for the accession of new member states.¹¹ This has shaped policy toward Roma in the accession states.

Both the OSCE (formerly the CSCE) and the Council of Europe (CE) have been actively engaged in constructing a framework for policy on minorities, including Roma.¹² Over 40 years ago, the CSCE led the way in taking on the issue of minorities in Europe. The Roma question was explicitly addressed a series of Human Dimension meetings held in the 1990s. In 1995, the OSCE created the Contact Point on Roma Issues within the Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), to focus on Roma rights and protections in general. In 1998, the Contact Point’s mandate was extended to “oversee, coordinate and advise on legislative and policy developments affecting Roma (and Sinti) both at the European and state levels” (Kováts 2001a).

The Council of Europe has demonstrated a concern for minority issues for many years, including the development of a convention on linguistic rights and protections for Roma.¹³ In 1993, a Council resolution declared Roma to be “a true European minority,” and established a Specialist Group on Roma/Gypsies. Together with the OSCE High Commissioner for National Minorities, the Specialist Group produced the *Guiding Principles for Improving the Situation of Roma* in candidate countries. Adopted by the EU in 1999, this document has been influential in shaping EU relations with post-communist countries regarding the Roma issue, as well as marking a convergence in CE, OSCE, and EU approaches to Roma policy. Over the years, the Council has undertaken various initiatives and have had an indirect influence on Roma through their work in the field of minority and linguistic rights.

The European Union—founded to build economic cooperation in Europe—historically has not engaged directly in minority policies. As a result, through the principle of subsidiarity, education, culture, and language have predominantly remained the policy concerns of member states, not the Community. Nevertheless, the Treaty of

Maastricht, signed February 1992, established the EU as an economic and political union. It also opened the door for the EU to include within its scope some actions pertaining to culture, providing that the EC shall “contribute to the flowering of the cultures of the Member States, while respecting their national and regional diversity.” In the context of minority rights, this article recognized the existence of diversity within and between its member states, as well as the importance of EU and member state support for preserving this diversity.

Most Central and East European countries have, at some level, accepted the importance of protecting national minority rights. Those aspiring to join the EU are beginning to undertake reforms. As of March 2001, 33 states had ratified and entered into force the Council of Europe *Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities* (Council of Europe 1995), the first legally binding multilateral instrument devoted to the protection of national minorities in general. All EU accession candidate countries have signed, ratified, and entered into force the convention, with the exception of Latvia and Turkey. Six EU member states have not ratified the Framework: France, Finland, Belgium, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal (Goldston and Guglielmo 2001).

In Central and Eastern Europe, some have complained of a gap between this broad political agreement and effective action, including legal enforcement by the European Court of Human Rights.¹⁴ Existing domestic institutions addressing minority issues also may lack the resources, or the mandate, to coordinate and enforce policy implementation (OSI 2001). Still, minority rights as a distinct approach to Roma issues has been gaining ground in Central and Eastern Europe (Pogany 1999).

Tensions Between Policy Approaches

Current policy toward Roma in Europe is shaped by the tensions between various policy approaches, as well as the legacies of past policies. Legacies of exclusion, for instance, live on and conflict with newer policies of integration—as seen in disputes about banning Roma from public establishments or about ways to reduce skin-

head violence. Roma communities are also divided between those who advocate more integration with majority societies in Europe and traditionalists who want to maintain a distinct identity. Such divisions may be reflected in debates over whether to emphasize teaching of Roma language and culture in schools, in an effort to preserve and promote Roma culture, or to emphasize early education programs that train Roma students in the majority language and culture.

The Roma leaders Nicholae Gheorghe and Andrej Mirga hold that there is no fundamental contradiction “between integration and maintaining a Romani identity. It is rather a question of a conscious attempt to modernize the Romani identity without necessarily implying its abandonment. Thus, integration or even partial assimilation, which would lead to an undifferentiated incorporation of the Roma into mainstream society, can be regarded as a worthy ideology by Romani elites. The fear of losing their identity, strongly endorsed by the traditionalists, should be overcome by a serious reassertion and redefinition of the Romani identity” (PER 1997a). However, a movement to create a modern Roma identity more compatible with modern economic development and integration into European societies, would have to come from the Roma community itself. And one unique aspect of Roma culture in Europe is that such a movement has not occurred.

Both individual and group rights approaches complement economic and social development approaches designed to address the roots of Roma poverty and exclusion, but they are not substitutes for them. Rights based approaches alone cannot reduce poverty and promote economic and social development. Roma need not just formal rights but real economic opportunities. Creating these opportunities goes beyond the usual legal protections that rights-based approaches normally encompass. Furthermore, instruments to enforce economic and social rights are weak and in most cases cannot be addressed directly through legal standards and mechanisms. Only a few of the constraints faced by Roma can be addressed through legislative measures. The final chapter of this volume proposes addressing Roma

poverty through inclusive policies that complement rights-based measures and tackling the economic and social issues facing Roma.

CONCLUSIONS

After a difficult transition to market economies and democratic political regimes, the countries of Central and Eastern Europe face serious challenges in addressing poverty and social exclusion. Nowhere are these problems more acute than for Roma. Transition has had a worse impact on Roma than on other groups for a variety of interconnected reasons: legacies of past policies, low skill levels and educational attainment of Roma themselves, a tendency toward cultural separation, a history of poor relations with the mainstream societies and states of Europe, poor policy responses, and a reduction in social spending caused in large part by macro-economic decline.

Addressing Roma poverty requires, first of all, understanding it. Therefore, the following chapters will set the stage for a deeper policy discussion by asking: What distinguishes Roma poverty from that of other groups in the region? Chapter Two presents the results of surveys that seek to answer this question, while country chapters on Slovakia, Romania, and Hungary provide a more in-depth look at Roma poverty in selected communities, using interviews with Roma themselves. Country chapters also explore the question: How have the transition countries of Central and Eastern Europe addressed the Roma issue to date? In particular, the chapter on Hungary reviews a number of Roma programs and policies and the chapter on Spain provides an example of how west European countries have addressed Roma issues. Finally, the book concludes with the lessons of this experience, and new strategies for the future.

NOTES

1. The countries invited to join the Copenhagen Summit of the EU on December 12, 2002 include Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, the Slovak Republic, and Slovenia. Bulgaria and Romania are in accession negotiations.

2. OSCE 2000; OSI 2001; Save the Children 2001; UNDP 2003.

3. Europe and Central Asia (ECA) refers to the former socialist countries of Central and Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union.

4. There is substantial international evidence that welfare and socioeconomic status can have an ethnic dimension, including analysis on the disparities in welfare between blacks, whites, and native Americans in the United States, the conditions of indigenous peoples in Latin America, and the status of ethnic minorities in other parts of the world. For a review of the literature, see Psacharopoulos and Patrinos (1994).

5. This differs significantly across subgroups, ranging from 14 to 85 percent (Tomova 1998).

6. The European Roma Rights Center has extensively documented discrimination and human rights violations of Roma. Regular updates and country reports can be found at: www.errc.org.

7. Article 6 of the Treaty on European Union refers to the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, which has been ratified by all European states. The protection of individuals belonging to minorities are considered to be "an inherent part" of the EU policy on human rights. The Convention's Article 14 states that the rights and freedoms laid down in the Convention should "be secured without discrimination on any ground such as sex, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth or other status." See http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/human_rights/rm/.

8. The Copenhagen Document is sometimes referred to as the "European Constitution of Human Rights." It was adopted in 1990 by the Conference on the Human Dimension of the Conference on Security and Cooperation. While legally nonbinding, it explicitly recognizes the importance of national minorities.

9. The Framework Convention, developed by the Council of Europe in 1995, entered into force in February 1998; it is legally binding under international law and contains principles that each Contracting Party must implement through national legislation and government policies.

10. The EU Charter on Fundamental Rights lays down the equality before the law of all people (Article 20), prohibits discrimination (Article 21), and requests the Union to protect cultural, religious and linguistic diversity. See http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/human_rights/rm/ .

11. These political conditions were determined during the European Council meeting of June 1993. According to the concluding document, “membership requires that the candidate country has achieved stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities” (Conclusions of the Copenhagen European Council 1993).

12. See also Kováts 2001a and 2001b.

13. The Council of Europe’s European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (1992) contains provisions which may be applied to “non-territorial” languages such as the Roma language.

14. The European Court of Human Rights recently noted that while there was an “emerging international consensus... recognizing the special needs of minorities and an obligation to protect their security, identity and lifestyle... [the divided Court itself is] not persuaded that the consensus is sufficiently concrete for it to derive any guidance as to the conduct or standards which Contracting States consider desirable in any particular situation” (from *Chapman v. United Kingdom*, UCHR, Judgment of 18 January 2001 (No.27238/95), in Open Society Institute 2001).

Chapter Two: ROMA POVERTY AND WELFARE: AN OVERVIEW

Poverty is a multidimensional phenomenon that goes well beyond low income or lack of material consumption.¹ According to the World Bank's 2000–2001 World Development Report *Attacking Poverty*, poverty encompasses such things as the psychological pain of being poor, a sense of vulnerability to external events, and powerlessness toward the institutions of state and society (World Bank 2001a). The Council of Europe (1995) has defined poverty as affecting those "persons, families or groups of persons whose resources (material, cultural, and social) are limited to the extent that they exclude them from the minimally accepted lifestyle of the countries where they live."

In the case of Roma, poverty is particularly multifaceted. Many Roma are deprived of the resources necessary for adequate living conditions, as well as access to opportunities and channels for participation. These problems are often interconnected. This chapter synthesizes evidence from primary and secondary sources to illustrate the interrelated challenges facing Roma in social welfare, housing, education, and health status. This sets the stage for further analysis of poverty and welfare in the following country chapters on Slovakia and Romania, which look further at geographic and social exclusion, and the diversity of living conditions among Roma communities.

The chapter begins with a discussion of some of the particular issues that arise in the analysis of data regarding Roma, and identifies the caveats that should be considered in interpreting the information. While the gaps and limitations of the information base on Roma are real, this does not invalidate the entire body of analysis. Throughout this volume information from multiple sources and perspectives are presented, in

order to pull together a comprehensive view of Roma welfare and living conditions.

MEASUREMENT CHALLENGES

Data on social welfare in Central and Eastern Europe are plagued with problems due to weak and sometimes biased statistical systems inherited from the socialist era and the use of definitions and methodologies that are often outdated, inconsistent with international standards, or not comparable across countries. These issues, however, pale in comparison with the challenge of measuring socioeconomic conditions of Roma. Seemingly straightforward questions, such how many Roma live in a particular country, prove extremely challenging.

Different approaches among surveys frequently yield contrasting results and impede comparability of data. For example, some household surveys ask respondents to identify their ethnicity, while others ask the interviewer to indicate the respondent's ethnicity, or to determine ethnicity by asking about the respondent's native language. The latter approach may underestimate the number of Roma, many of whom do not speak Roma dialects. Other obstacles exist in the analysis of administrative data, such as education and labor market statistics. Several countries have stopped collecting data by ethnicity because of privacy legislation. Czechoslovakia stopped collecting data on students by ethnicity in 1990, and Hungary followed suit in 1993 (ERRC 1999; Radó 1997). Government officials are also frequently reluctant to inquire about ethnicity in surveys, for fear of raising ethnic tensions.

More fundamental questions about ethnicity and identity complicate the assessment of welfare. Some Roma do not consider themselves Roma or affiliate with a different ethnic group.

An ethnic Roma living in Hungary may feel more Hungarian than Roma, or vice versa. For the purpose of analysis in this volume, Roma are defined broadly to include both those who identify themselves as Roma and those identified by others as Roma. This stems both from the data sources used and from the policy focus of this analysis. After all, if policies affect ethnic minorities, they will do so regardless of how people identify themselves.

Another unique challenge of research on Roma is the legacy of biased research. Early studies on Roma in the late nineteenth century in Western Europe sought to confirm theories about genetic inferiority (Fraser 1995). Recent works reviewed in the Czech and Slovak Republics were found to have a social Darwinist slant (ECO-HOST 2000). More recent scholarship on Roma may suffer from political biases. Roma leaders and activists have an interest in portraying the situation as worse than it may actually be, while government reports may gloss over failings to present a more favorable picture (Bárány 2000).

A further caveat is warranted. The diversity of Roma impedes generalizations at the regional and country level. In addition to notable ethnic differences, there is significant diversity among Roma settlements: rural/urban, assimilated/non-assimilated, homogenous/heterogeneous, as well as religious affiliations. Some groups speak variations of the Roma language, while others do not. For analytical purposes, this report assumes some commonalities across countries and groups, but its conclusions are necessarily tentative. The qualitative case studies presented in subsequent chapters illuminate some of these differences.

How is Poverty Measured?

Measuring poverty is an inherently subjective task fraught with methodological complexities.² There is no correct or scientific method. Empirical analyses of poverty generally focus on measuring income poverty, and therefore provide only a partial picture. In this chapter, quantitative measures of poverty are complemented with other data sources—for example on education and health status—to fill in some of the non-income dimen-

sions of poverty. The following chapters use qualitative analysis to identify some non-measurable aspects of welfare and exclusion.

Poverty is usually measured using a nationally representative household survey that assesses the welfare of the population. Welfare indicators, including poverty rates, are constructed using either consumption—measured by household expenditures on food and non-food items—or household income. Consumption data are generally considered more reliable; there are substantial problems with measuring income, including the difficulty of capturing in-kind income. Individuals may also be reluctant to report income from informal activities for fear of having to pay taxes. The disincentives to reporting consumption are less problematic, but methodological questions also remain here, including what to include as consumption and the difficulties that respondents have in recalling household expenditures.

Once the welfare measure is constructed, poverty rates are usually defined as that share of the population living below a designated poverty line. There are many possible poverty lines. The most commonly used lines for analysis are absolute lines, related to basic nutritional and social needs, or relative poverty lines, which are related to prevailing income levels such as one-half, or two-thirds of mean income per capita (per person). Relative lines are useful for measuring poverty at the country level and for international comparisons of the characteristics of the most deprived individuals in a country. Many international comparisons of poverty rates are based on relative lines.³

In addition to these measures, the World Bank uses two absolute poverty lines to compare poverty across countries: \$2.15 purchasing power parity (PPP) per capita per day and \$4.30 PPP per capita per day.⁴ The adjustment to purchasing power parity accounts for differences in price levels across countries. These standard poverty lines allow comparisons of real values between countries. This chapter, uses quantitative, income-based definitions of poverty and shows how these connect with other dimensions of social exclusion in housing, labor markets, education, and health services.

AN ANALYSIS OF ROMA POVERTY IN THREE COUNTRIES

The following section looks at poverty among Roma in three countries: Bulgaria, Hungary, and Romania. Together these three countries comprise a significant share of the Roma population in the region. It relies on the household survey mentioned in Box 2.1 which was conducted by the Center for Comparative Research in the Sociology Department of Yale University in 2000.⁵ The survey was the first of its kind to address the ethnic dimension of poverty across countries and allows for a comparative quantitative assessment of the living conditions of Roma in the region. In each of the three countries, Roma were oversampled to allow for a more statistically robust picture of their living conditions.

Annual household expenditures are used as the main measure of household welfare. Because measures of poverty are very sensitive to the composition of the household, two sets of results were calculated based on (i) per capita expenditure (obtained by dividing total household expenditure by the number of household members); and (ii) per equivalent adult expenditures, (where expenditures are adjusted for both the size and composition of the household). In general, this adjustment for household size (per capita or equivalent adult) tends to yield much larger differences in poverty risks between Roma and non-Roma than using unadjusted (per capita) household expenditures, because Roma households tend to be much larger.

Poverty rates for Roma in all three countries are strikingly high—in all cases several times higher than among non-Roma.⁶ Table 2.1 summarizes the poverty rates for all three countries under the three different poverty lines—a relative line amounting to half of median per capita and per equivalent adult expenditures, and then the two international poverty lines, \$2.15 and \$4.30 per person, per day, adjusted for purchasing power parity.

The highest level of absolute poverty among Roma households lies in Bulgaria, followed closely by Romania. Even at the lower \$2.15 line, 41 percent of all Roma households in Bulgaria and 38 percent in Romania are found to be poor—a strikingly high proportion. At the higher line of \$4.30 PPP per capita, 80 percent of Roma households in Bulgaria and almost 70 percent of those in Romania are poor. Poverty among non-Roma households at the \$4.30 line in both of these countries is also high, but less than the levels among Roma. Although absolute poverty among Roma households is lower in Hungary, the difference between the situation of Roma and non-Roma households is equally stark. About 7 percent of Roma households in Hungary are poor based on the \$2.15 line, as compared to only 0.5 percent of non-Roma households. At the higher \$4.30 absolute poverty line—arguably a more appropriate one for prosperous Hungary—as many as 40 percent of Roma households are poor, compared to 6.9 percent of non-Roma households.

Table 2.1: Poverty Rates among Roma and Non-Roma Households, 2000

Country	50% of median		\$2.15PPP Per capita	\$4.30PPP Per capita
	Per equiv. adult	Per capita		
Bulgaria				
Roma	36.1	37.2	41.4	80.1
Non-Roma	3.8	3.4	4.1	36.8
Hungary				
Roma	24.5	26.3	6.6	40.3
Non-Roma	4.5	3.6	0.5	6.9
Romania				
Roma	39.5	43.1	37.6	68.8
Non-Roma	10.9	11.1	7.3	29.5

Sources: Yale dataset; Revenga et al. 2002.

Box 2.1: Who Are Roma?

Estimating the number of Roma in a country is both difficult and controversial. Household surveys and census data rarely include questions on ethnicity beyond asking individuals to report their ethnicity. A household survey conducted by a team of researchers from Yale University in 2000 experimented with different approaches to asking about ethnicity. The results provide lessons for the design of future surveys. The dataset takes a multifaceted approach, including questions on self-identification (asking the interviewee to report their ethnicity), interviewer identification (asking the interviewer to identify the ethnicity of the interviewee), language, parents' language, appearance, and family name. This approach allows for analysis based upon differing definitions of ethnicity.

The Roma population can be estimated in different ways using the survey data (Table 2.2). After identification by the interviewer, self-identification yields the largest populations. Very few individuals who report being Roma were not identified by the interviewer as Roma—two in the case of Bulgaria, and none in Hungary and Romania. On the other hand, the interviewers identified many people as Roma who did not identify themselves as Roma. In Romania, 61 percent of those identified as Roma by the interviewer did not self-identify. The corresponding shares for the other two countries are 38 percent in Hungary, and 24 percent in Bulgaria. It is difficult to know how to interpret these results. It may be that Roma in Romania are more integrated and feel more Romanian than Roma. Conversely Roma in Romania could be more afraid of identifying as Roma than Roma in the other countries.

Table 2.2: Roma Population Sizes by Type of Identification, 2000 (% of random sample)

	Bulgaria	Hungary	Romania
Self-Identification	6.6	3.1	1.2
Language	6.2	1.7	1.6
Mother's Ethnicity	7.2	3.1	1.1
Father's Ethnicity	6.9	3.5	1.2
Spouse's Ethnicity	6.6	1.1	0.8
Interviewer Identification	8.7	5.0	3.1

Sources: Yale Dataset; Revenga et al. 2002.

It could also be that only certain groups of Roma self-identify as Roma. The share of the population self-identifying as Roma is relatively close to the share of the population who report speaking the Roma language at home. For example, in Hungary, only the Wallach Roma speak the Roma language. The other two main groups of Roma in the country—the Beash and Rumungro Roma—generally speak Romanian, and Hungarian respectively. This could mean that self-identification is more likely to capture the Wallach, while other Roma are less likely to consider themselves Roma. The data also suggest that ethnic identity may be weakening over time. In Bulgaria and Hungary, the share of respondents who identify their parents as Roma is higher than the share who identify themselves as Roma.

The differences in poverty rates between Roma and non-Roma when using the relative poverty line are also very large. On an equivalent adult basis, Hungary and Bulgaria look fairly similar: relative poverty among non-Roma households oscillates around 4 percent, while

among Roma households, it is close to 25 percent in Hungary and about 37 percent in Bulgaria. In Romania, the differences between relative poverty rates for Roma and non-Roma are equally large, but poverty among the non-Roma is noticeably higher than in Bulgaria or Hungary, indicat-

ing a more skewed distribution of expenditure for all households.

As expected, poverty looks worse among Roma households when using the per capita line, which basically reflects the fact that Roma households have a larger number of children. The per capita figures treats every household member as having the same consumption needs, whereas the figures based on per equivalent adult measures assume children have lesser consumption needs.

Correlates of Poverty

Why are poverty rates so different between Roma and non-Roma households? In large part, this is due to differences in the underlying correlates of poverty, especially educational achievement, employment status, and household size. The main correlates of poverty for Roma and non-Roma alike are the employment status of the head of the household, educational achievement of the household head, and the number of children, although the nature of the relationship

varies significantly across countries and between Roma and non-Roma families (Table 2.3).

The risk of poverty is highest among families where the household head has little education or is unemployed, as well as among families with three or more children. But the association between poverty and these correlates appears stronger for non-Roma families than for Roma. For example, among non-Roma families where the household head has no education at all, the poverty rate is several times that of families where the head has secondary education. Among Roma families, poverty tends to be relatively high irrespective of educational attainment (with the possible exception of Hungary). Similar results occur with respect to employment status: among non-Roma families, the risk of poverty in households where the head is unemployed is many times that of households where the head is employed, but among Roma families headed by an employed person, the risk of poverty remains high. Taken together, the evidence suggests a

Table 2.3: Main Poverty Correlates, 2000 (poverty rate in %)

	Bulgaria		Hungary		Romania	
	Roma	Non-Roma	Roma	Non-Roma	Roma	Non-Roma
Education:						
No school	31.2	0.0	39.6	47.4	84.3	16.5
Primary	39.8	5.3	27.2	5.07	42.6	16.0
Secondary	31.3	2.9	6.2	1.47	31.8	7.5
Higher	0.0	0.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.6
Employment status of household head:						
Employed	20.5	3.3	15.3	2.5	15.6	8.5
Unemployed	48.5	9.1	34.5	15.1	45.3	26.1
Out of the labor force	46.7	2.2	50.3	6.9	69.4	20.5
Retired/disabled	17.4	1.2	19.8	2.7	32.9	7.1
Number of children						
Zero	25.2	2.5	14.2	2.8	27.3	7.3
One	34.7	6.1	23.3	3.7	38.8	13.5
Two	49.1	5.6	29.0	9.9	52.7	26.4
Three	59.2	15.8	42.0	11.2	73.4	50.3
Four	65.5	0.0	82.8	44.2	59.9	64.9
National Poverty Rate	37.2	3.4	26.3	3.6	43.1	11.1

Note: Poverty line is equal to 50 percent of median of per capita expenditure.

Sources: Yale dataset; Revenga et al. 2002.

strong association between Roma poverty and education, employment, and household size. However, for Roma, the probability of being poor is higher than that of non-Roma, irrespective of educational achievement and employment status.

Although these poverty correlates (education, employment status, number of children) are associated with a high risk of poverty, households with these characteristics do not necessarily constitute the bulk of the poor. In fact, the composition of the poor largely reflects the weight of each demographic group in the overall population. Among non-Roma families, a sizeable fraction of the poor are the so-called working poor—in other words, the head of household is employed. Among Roma, the fraction of household heads who are working is much lower, and their weight in the composition of the poor is correspondingly lower. In the large majority of poor Roma families, the head of the household is unemployed.

Similar differences exist by educational attainment. While among non-Roma a sizeable fraction of poor heads of households have primary or secondary education, the bulk of poor Roma households are headed by someone with primary or less than primary education.

Multivariate Analysis of Roma Poverty

The previous discussion focused on a one-dimensional analysis of poverty, examining how poverty rates differ across households based on a single characteristic such as education or employment status. But many household characteristics are often correlated among themselves. For example, households where the head has a low level of education are more likely to be poor; household heads with low education may also face a higher probability of being unemployed; and being unemployed is also correlated with a higher probability of being poor. Does low education increase the risk of poverty directly? Or does it increase poverty through its impact on employment status? Or both? To answer these questions, multivariate regression analysis is needed to control for the differential influences of diverse factors. The following highlights these findings.

The results underscore the strong negative association between Roma ethnicity and welfare,

even when controlling for other characteristics. In other words, if the other household characteristics are held constant, per adult equivalent expenditure of Roma households is between 20 and 40 percent lower in the three countries than that of non-Roma households—a striking difference. The other household characteristics also affect welfare. The number of children, for example, is strongly negatively associated with per adult equivalent consumption in all three countries. Employment is positively associated with welfare in all cases, while unemployment shows a negative association (although not always a strongly significant one). The relationship between education of the household head and household welfare is positive, as expected, but there are noticeable differences in the returns to education across countries. Returns to higher education—in terms of higher household consumption—are high in all three countries but highest in Romania.

Additional analysis looked at factors influencing welfare for Roma only. There is no reason why returns to education or other characteristics should be the same for both Roma and non-Roma. If Roma families live in different areas, engage in different activities, or make different decisions regarding household investment and consumption, then the returns to household characteristics—in terms of welfare—may be quite different.⁷ Such differential behaviors, while beneficial in the short run, can reduce long term prospects for escaping poverty. For this reason, additional analysis was undertaken for the Roma households only, including variables of little relevance to the majority population, but important to Roma welfare.

One factor shown elsewhere to influence behavioral patterns is location. Residential differentiation or segregation can lower returns to productive endowments for minority groups relative to the returns on the same endowments for the overall population (van der Walle and Gunewardena 2001; Nord 1998). For Roma, the effect of location is probably best captured by the difference between those living in a Roma settlement versus those living in a more integrated neighborhood. Another factor that may be important is whether the individual or the interviewer identi-

fies itself as Roma. Households which self-identify as Roma are likely to be from less integrated and more traditional Roma communities—and hence may be poorer than other Roma.⁸

The Roma-only analysis does yield some different results, suggesting that using the same model for Roma and non-Roma samples may be inappropriate. Most strikingly, adult equivalent expenditures are lower for Roma households living in Roma-only settlements than for those living in other locations, suggesting a connection between living in a geographically segregated area and welfare. Additional analysis found that much of the difference between the welfare of Roma and non-Roma is due to differences in opportunities and characteristics—such as education levels and employment status. But an important component is structural, reflecting differences in the communities. This likely reflects discrimination, exclusion, and cultural factors. While the quantitative data cannot provide more insights into these issues, the qualitative analysis presented in the following chapters examines these unmeasurable dimensions of exclusion more closely.

HOUSING

The multivariate analysis highlighted a link between geographic location and Roma poverty. This is closely related to housing conditions. Because of the diversity of Roma communities and contrasting conditions across countries, it is difficult to draw conclusions about the characteristics of Roma settlements and housing. Many issues in housing are similar to those faced by non-Roma populations, particularly for communities and households that have integrated into non-Roma areas. But Roma confront unique problems. The housing policies of successive empires, socialist regimes, and recent governments have often led to regional and geographic isolation and segregation of Roma neighborhoods. This has, in turn, limited access to public services and raised questions about land and property ownership. Compounded by discrimination from some surrounding communities and municipal governments, conditions in many Roma settlements have deteriorated significantly.

Many socialist initiatives to integrate Roma provided housing along with employment. Current Roma neighborhoods in some areas have their roots in these settlements, although it is unclear how many (Macura and Petrovic 1999). Findings from a government housing survey in Hungary indicate that 60,000 Roma—approximately 13 percent of Roma in Hungary—live in settlement-type environments isolated from the majority population (Puporka and Zádori 1999). This was confirmed in another 1994 survey, which found that 14 percent of Roma lived in settlements (Kémeny, et al. 1994). This spatial segregation results from such reasons as the historical location of Roma neighborhoods, municipal planning, and housing preferences (Box 2.2). Some Roma communities have chosen to live separately; others who had hoped to move hit barriers of discrimination.

In the countries of South East Europe which were formerly part of the Ottoman Empire, Roma neighborhoods—called mahalas—are common in cities. Towns under the Ottomans were organized into administrative units based on the ethnicity and religion of the inhabitants. While these divisions—themselves known as mahalas, giving rise to the name—have largely disappeared, Roma settlements based them still exist. In the countries of the former Yugoslavia, Roma mahalas range from several hundred to several thousand inhabitants; in Bulgaria, some are as large as 15–20,000. In some cases Roma mahalas were originally built on the outskirts of towns, but as urbanization has proceeded and the towns have grown, these settlements may now lie close to the center of some cities.

Another common type of settlement rooted in the socialist era are neighborhoods near state-owned enterprises, often in one-company towns. As part of their integration or assimilation campaigns, socialist governments provided housing for Roma along with employment. Rents were either free to employees or heavily subsidized. In the transition period, as many state enterprises have been closed or restructured and collective farms have been broken up, the inhabitants lost their jobs. Many of these areas have become impoverished.

Box 2.2: Spatial Segregation within Roma Settlements

There are common patterns to the internal geography of some urban mahala neighborhoods. The Nikola Kochev district in Sliven, Bulgaria provides a typical example. Approximately 4–6,000 Bulgarian Roma live in Nikola Kochev, a settlement traced to the fifteenth century. Most of the inhabitants are textile workers, descendants of some of the first workers in a textile industry that dates back to the mid-1800s.

The organization of the district reflects class distinctions within Roma society. The best-off members of the Roma community live in direct contact with Bulgarians on the periphery of the settlement, a large share of the adults are employed, and most of their children attend school regularly and continue on through secondary school. There are a large share of elderly inhabitants in this part of the settlement, as many of the young people have moved to apartments in more ethnically mixed parts of town.

Poverty increases further into the settlement, in an area nicknamed “the Jungle.” The inhabitants here are poorer, less educated, and less integrated. Most are unemployed. Conditions in the Jungle are extremely bleak, with houses often constructed from scavenged materials and lacking water and electricity.

Source: Tomova 2000.

Roma in cities are highly segregated. Research in Hungary traced the growth of these areas to the migration of Roma from the countryside during the economic crisis at the end of the 1980s. Faced with growing unemployment, many Roma moved to Budapest in search of better opportunities. Over time, due to declining living conditions and poor access to municipal services, conditions in these neighborhoods severely deteriorated. Common side effects of slums appeared, including drug addiction and rising crime (Ladányi 1993). The further deterioration of living conditions and employment opportunities has likely led to continued rural–urban migration.

The transition process has created problems with the legal status of housing for Roma, in part because property rights were often not clearly defined under communism. Some Roma were evicted from state-owned apartments when housing subsidies were withdrawn, properties privatized, or returned to prior owners. Many Roma now find themselves living illegally in dwellings, either because they had no choice but to squat or because the property rights on their building were transferred following the transition (OSCE 2000). In other cases, poor Roma have intentionally become squatters. These developments have seriously limited access to social services, as residency and ID papers are frequently required for social assistance benefits, health care, and educa-

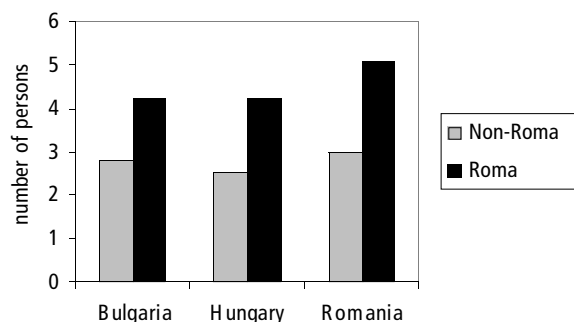
tion. In addition, many Roma communities have tapped into public services illegally, channeling water or electricity into their settlements.

Housing options for Roma have also been limited by discrimination by municipal officials and landlords. In some cases, local governments have attempted to reduce illegal tenancy by moving settlements to the outskirts of towns.⁹ In other cases, municipal officials have overtly banned Roma—as was the case in 1997, when two Slovak villages prohibited Roma from entering and settling. These bans were challenged in the European Court of Human Rights and lifted. Other municipal governments have reportedly bought land and apartments to ensure that Roma will not be able to settle in them (OSCE 2000).

Questions about the legality of property ownership have arisen with land as well. The post-communist process of land restitution has had a varied impact on Roma. Because Roma were not traditionally landowners, few were eligible to file claims. In some cases, Roma who worked on collective farms were entitled to receive land after the cooperatives dissolved.

Housing Conditions

Roma neighborhoods are frequently extremely overcrowded and destitute. Some Roma slums have evocative nicknames; for example, “Abysinia” and “Cambodia,” are extremely impover-

Figure 2.1: Household Size in Bulgaria, Hungary, and Romania, 2000

Sources: Yale Dataset; Revenga et al. 2002.

ished areas within Roma ghettos in Bulgaria. The household survey data show that Roma living quarters are smaller than others, have larger households and are consequently more crowded (Figure 2.1). According to the Yale dataset, Roma households are nearly twice the size of non-Roma. In Romania, based upon a 1998 household survey, Roma dwellings were, on average, 20 percent smaller than those for Romanians, although their household size was significantly larger.¹⁰

Lack of water, gas, electricity, and public services such as waste collection bedevils many Roma neighborhoods. According to the Yale survey data, Roma are less likely to have access to water and sewage than other groups. Access to utilities—including electricity, heating, and water—is significantly lower for Roma households (Table 2.4). Only 9 percent of Roma houses in Bulgaria, and 10 percent of them in Romania had hot water. Access to bathroom facilities and indoor toilets is similarly low. Few Roma households have telephones: only 12 percent in Bulgaria, 41 percent in Hungary, and 26 percent in Romania (in contrast with between 58 and 81 percent for non-Roma households). Over half of Roma households in Bulgaria reported wet walls and leaky roofs, significantly more than in the other countries.¹¹

Cultural preferences of Roma communities also affect conditions within Roma settlements, although it is difficult to generalize here. Non-Roma across countries sometimes complain that Roma do not take care of their surroundings, and that they destroy property and public spaces. Some of these perceptions may stem from cultural differences. For example, some Roma groups reportedly have taboos against adjoining kitchen and toilet facilities. As public housing initiatives did not incorporate the views and culture of Roma into

Table 2.4: Housing Characteristics by Ethnicity, 2000 (% of households)

	Bulgaria		Hungary		Romania	
	Non-Roma	Roma	Non-Roma	Roma	Non-Roma	Roma
Households with:						
Electricity	99.6	94.5	99.0	98.1	99.1	94.5
Central or gas heating	16.1	4.1	78.6	35.3	51.2	25.6
Cold running water	96.8	67.6	92.0	65.3	67.4	41.4
Hot running water	39.1	9.4	83.2	45.1	35.3	10.7
Sewer or cesspool	90.3	52.3	58.3	33.4	53.6	30.0
Telephone	80.6	12.1	76.0	41.4	58.2	26.4
Bathroom/shower	82.5	23.5	88.8	50.2	54.3	18.9
Indoor toilet	65.2	15.0	86.4	49.9	52.6	18.3
Wet walls	20.6	50.4	16.6	40.1	21.0	44.9
Leaky roofs	19.2	54.2	9.6	33.0	14.8	40.2
Earthen floor used for sleeping	7.4	36.7	5.8	13.2	19.3	39.0

Sources: Yale Dataset; Revenga et al. 2002.

their design, inhabitants have had little interest in the maintenance and upkeep of the buildings. Above all, poverty makes it difficult for households to maintain their housing conditions. In effect, some of these complaints reflect a dual prejudice: exclusion leads to Roma poverty, and then fellow citizens castigate Roma for living in squalid conditions—as if anyone chooses to be poor.

LABOR MARKET STATUS

Perhaps the most dramatic changes for Roma following the transition from socialism took place in the labor market. In Central and Eastern Europe, employment levels fell significantly during the early years of the transition, as restructuring began and subsidies for large state-owned enterprises were slashed.¹² Because of their low skill levels, as well as discrimination in the labor market, Roma were frequently among the first to be laid off. This has directly influenced Roma welfare. Roma have limited opportunities to reenter the workforce, so unemployment rates—and particularly long-term unemployment—are often exceptionally high. Reports of unemployment rates of up to 100 percent in Roma settlements are not uncommon.

Roma have historically had connections to traditional occupations. Indeed, many of the names of Roma subgroups derive from associations with particular crafts dating back to the Middle Ages. But few of these connections still exist. Roma were traditionally not landowners and had scant involvement in agriculture. In the early twentieth century, many of the traditional occupations declined with industrialization. Crafts such as metal and woodworking faced competition from manufactured goods and Roma began to shift into other areas of economic activity.

With socialism, Roma were compelled to move from self-employment and informal sector activity into full-time public sector jobs. Full employment and job security were defining characteristics of the socialist regimes. Employment was encouraged through guaranteed jobs, low wages, and a wide range of associated benefits and services, including housing subsidies, child care, and health services. Unemployment was

considered illegal in some countries and sanctions could be imposed for part-time work, self-employment or not working. For example, the right and obligation to work was enshrined in the Czechoslovak Constitution (Ministry of Labor 1997). In 1970, the Romanian government decreed that “social parasitism” and other “deviant behaviors” were punishable with prison and forced labor (Rughinis 2000).

In this context, employment of Roma was actively promoted through recruitment and assimilation campaigns. Along with the rest of the population, Roma were brought to work in the process of industrialization and collectivization of agriculture. Because of their low education levels, Roma were most frequently employed in low-skilled manufacturing industries. During the socialist period, employment rates for Roma in some countries did not differ greatly from those of non-Roma (Box 2.3). In the Slovak Republic in the 1980s, 70 percent of working-age Roma were employed (Ministry of Labor 1997).¹³ A survey of Roma in Hungary in 1971 found that employment levels of working-age Roma men were slightly higher than those of non-Roma, with employment rates of 88 and 85 percent respectively (Kertesi 1994).

Developments in Transition

Large-scale restructuring in the early years of the transition period had an immediate impact on the labor market status of Roma. By 1993, employment levels of Roma in Hungary had fallen to 26 percent of the labor force and 63 percent for the population at large (Kémeny, et al. 1994). These trends have worsened during the transition period, as Roma found it difficult to reenter the labor force, and the gap in unemployment between Roma and non-Roma widened. In the Czech Republic, government estimates for 1999 suggested that 70 percent of the Roma were unemployed, in contrast with 10 percent of the total population (OSCE 2000).

Because Roma were among the first laid off in the early 1990s, the duration of their unemployment is exceptionally high (Figure 2.2). The gap is particularly bad in Bulgaria, where the duration of unemployment lasted 27 months on average

Box 2.3: Measuring Unemployment

Reports of exceptionally high unemployment rates for Roma settlements—between 70-100 percent—are common but difficult to fathom, particularly in countries with active informal sectors. In these cases, it is important to note how unemployment is measured and defined.

In general, there are two main instruments for measuring unemployment. First are registration statistics based on the administrative records of the labor offices. But registration data capture only those individuals who report to labor offices and do not reflect any kind of informal labor market activity. These data may significantly underestimate the long-term unemployed. Many countries limit the duration of their unemployment benefits, and once these have expired, people have no incentive to report to the labor offices. Registration data also generally do not capture ethnicity.

The second important source are labor force and household surveys. These surveys ask about economic activity in general and can reflect both informal and formal employment. However, as was discussed in the first chapter of this report, survey data are limited in their ability to differentiate by ethnicity.

Data included in this report are mainly from household surveys and other targeted surveys of the Roma population. Unless otherwise indicated, employment includes the share of the working-age population (defined differently depending on the country and source), that has worked for in-cash or in-kind payment during a set period (either the previous week or month). In this case, informal employment is included. In contrast, unemployment refers to the share of the working-age population that has not worked for payment.

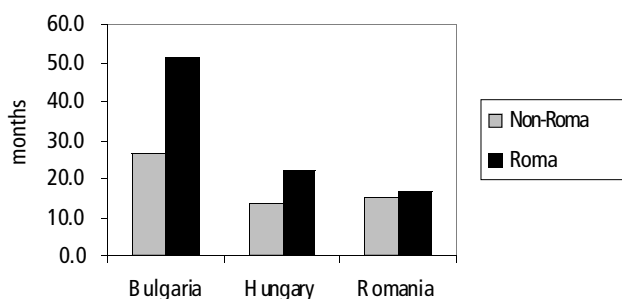
but soared to 51 months for Roma. Long-term unemployment has been consistently high in Bulgaria during the transition period, indicating the persistence of a stagnant pool of long-term unemployed who are unable to reenter the labor market. Among them is a sizeable fraction of Roma. On the other hand, the difference in the duration

of unemployment for Roma and non-Roma is not significant in Romania.

High rates of unemployment among Roma only tell part of the labor market story. Informal sector activity is also an important source of income. The types of activities vary widely, from lucrative trade and work in neighboring countries, to more marginal subsistence occupations ranging from seasonal farming to gathering herbs and recycling used materials. Some Roma may prefer more flexible and entrepreneurial informal sector activities and self-employment to wage labor.

Popular stereotypes characterize Roma as lazy. However, survey data indicate that Roma actively seek employment. In Bulgaria in 1997, 46 percent of unemployed Roma reported that they were looking for a job, compared to 19 percent of the total unemployed population. In Romania, 35 percent of unemployed Roma had looked for employment during the previous week, in comparison with 15 percent of the total population. Similar results were found for Hungary (Kertesi 1994). However, more information on Roma values and attitudes toward work is required to

Figure 2.2: Duration of Unemployment, 2000
(months)



Sources: Yale dataset; Revenga et al. 2002.

understand these data fully. For example, as Roma are more frequently engaged in short-term informal sector activities and may have more than one job, they may inevitably spend more time looking for work.

EDUCATION STATUS

The education status of Roma has historically been low across Europe. While significant gains were made in enrolling Roma children in school during the socialist era, the gap in the educational attainment of Roma and the rest of the population was not bridged in any of the countries for which data are available. The evidence suggests that access has eroded during the transition period, and Roma children of basic school age are increasingly not starting or finishing school. These trends are consistent with national developments in enrollments, although data suggest that the decline in access among Roma has been deeper than for the rest of the population.

Gaps in access to education among the Roma are not new. Not until the socialist regimes came to power in Central and Eastern Europe following World War II were large numbers of Roma compelled to participate in public education. Education was a key element of socialist assimilation campaigns. It was viewed as an instrument of political and economic socialization which would facilitate the integration of the Roma into the full employment society. Despite the achievements in reducing literacy and increasing school participation, the efforts undertaken during the socialist era laid the foundation for inequities in education quality, as many Roma were channeled into separate or segregated schools outside the mainstream system.

Education in the Transition Period

Gaps in education persist in the transition period and are most evident in analysis of the educational levels of the population. Comparable surveys conducted in Hungary in 1971 and 1993 illustrate these trends. In 1971, about 26 percent of Hungarian Roma aged 20–29 had finished 8 years of primary school. This had increased to over 77 percent by 1993 (Kémeny et al. 1994).

Despite these achievements, the educational attainment of Roma lagged significantly behind the non-Roma population, with Roma much less likely to continue on to secondary and post-secondary education.

The Yale dataset also illustrates lower educational attainment among Roma. Most Roma have primary education or below, while most non-Roma in the three countries have some secondary, post-secondary or university education (Table 2.5). Bulgaria provides the most dramatic example; 89 percent of Roma had primary education or less, while only 10 percent had some secondary education. In contrast, 33 percent of non-Roma had primary education or below, while 54 percent of the population continued on to secondary school and 14 percent to tertiary. Results are similar for Hungary and Romania. Less than 1 percent of Roma in all countries continued past secondary school.

It is not surprising that education levels vary notably within countries, between urban and rural areas, and across different types of Roma communities. In Hungary, for example, the 1993 survey mentioned above found that the share of Roma who had not completed primary education was 16 percent in Budapest, 24 percent in towns and 27 percent in villages, reflecting different constraints to access (Puporka and Zádori 1999).

Differences between types of Roma are also important. For example, the same survey found that the share of Roma with less than basic education was 23 percent for the Romungro Roma (whose native language is Hungarian), 42 percent for the Bayash (native language Romanian), and 48 percent for the Wallach Roma (native language is Roma) (Puporka and Zádori 1999). Similar findings were noted in Bulgaria.

Enrollments and Attendance

Disparities in enrollments between Roma and non-Roma suggest that the gaps in educational attainment will persist into the next generation. In Bulgaria and Romania, the Yale data show a significant difference in enrollment levels for children of basic school age. In Bulgaria, enrollment rates for Roma were 33 percent lower, while in Romania, the difference is 20 percent (Figure 2.3).

Table 2.5: Educational Attainment by Ethnicity, 2000 (age 18+)

	Bulgaria		Hungary		Romania	
	Non-Roma	Roma	Non-Roma	Roma	Non-Roma	Roma
Primary or Below	32.7	89.6	35.0	76.4	33.1	66.5
No Education	1.3	15.0	0.3	4.3	1.9	13.4
Incomplete Primary	9.4	39.6	10.7	22.1	15.0	27.0
Complete Primary	22.0	35.0	24.0	49.9	16.2	25.2
Some secondary	53.8	9.6	53.0	23.4	56.3	32.4
Completed Primary and Apprenticeship	2.2	1.8	25.5	19.0	18.9	13.1
Incomplete General Secondary	2.3	1.6	6.1	1.5	6.6	9.0
Completed General Secondary	19.4	3.0	17.5	2.7	23.9	8.9
Secondary and Vocational	29.8	3.2	3.8	0.2	6.9	1.3
Higher education (Complete and Incomplete)	13.5	0.5	12.0	0.2	10.4	0.3
Incl. post-secondary and university						
No Answer	0	0.4	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.8

Sources: Yale Dataset; Revenga et al. 2002.

In Hungary, the gap in enrollments was not significant, at less than 2 percentage points.

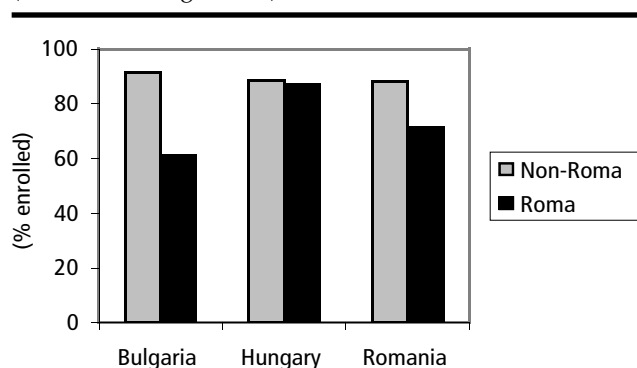
Enrollment rates tell only part of the story. In some cases, students may enroll at the beginning of the year but not actually attend school. Qualitative studies show that this often happens in poor Roma communities where the costs of education for families are high (Box 2.4). It is also important to note that enrollment rates calculated from the Yale survey data indicate only whether children are enrolled in school—and not whether they are enrolled in the appropriate level. In contrast with conventional enrollment rates, the rates presented above indicate whether children between the ages of 6 and 14 were enrolled at all, which may be misleading if many children are repeating grades.

Preprimary attendance may have been most damaged during the transition period. In general, preschool and kindergarten enrollment rates have fallen across the region, as subsidies for schools connected to state enterprises were withdrawn and fees were introduced (UNICEF 1997). Growing costs have discouraged parents from sending children to school. In the Slovak Republic in 1990, 80 percent of Roma children aged 3–6

attended preschool. This dropped by 60 percent in the 1991 school year, and by 1997 less than 20 percent of Roma children were thought to attend (Slovak Ministry of Labor 1997). In Hungary, where preschool is compulsory for all children at age five, 11 percent of Roma did not attend school in 1997 (Radó 1997). This is a serious development; children who do not start preschool are less likely to attend primary school

Figure 2.3: Enrollments in Education, 2000

(% of children aged 6-14)



Sources: Yale dataset; Revenga et al. 2002.

Box 2.4: School Drop-Outs in Bulgaria: The Case of the Missing Children

National administrative data paint a rosy picture of access to education in Bulgaria. Gross enrollment rates are nearly universal, and very few children are identified as being out of school. But a qualitative survey found that the reality is much more grim. In fact many children fall through the cracks, never attend school, and do not show up in the official administrative data. These children are frequently those from the poorest households. In the Nadezhda district, a Roma neighborhood in Sliven, a town in Eastern Bulgaria, the researchers found 273 children who had never been to school. Why is this the case? The study identified several reasons:

- There are no records of children from households which lack residence requirements—a serious issue for poor households, particularly Roma families who live in unregistered settlements, or in properties with illegal status.
- Monitoring of children has weakened. Children are no longer required to enroll in the school in the district in which they live. There is no coordination between district schools to ensure that all children are enrolled and no system to monitor whether children who have left one school enroll in another.
- There are no mechanisms for following up on children who have been expelled—to find out what happens to them and whether they reenroll in school. Similarly, there is no follow up for children who leave school voluntarily and are not officially considered drop-outs.
- School and local officials face incentives not to report drop-outs to maintain class sizes to avoid school closures.

Source: Kabachieva and Iliev 2002.

and may have more difficulty remaining in school. For Roma children, these issues are compounded by the fact that many do not speak the national language at home and thus begin primary school at a disadvantage.

As illustrated in the breakdown of the educational status of the population, the gulf between education levels is wider for Roma than non-Roma, indicating the challenges of moving from one level of education to the other. Limited evidence suggests that dropout rates have risen during the transition period—disproportionately so for Roma children (UNICEF 1998). Informal estimates for Bulgaria suggest that 45,000 students drop out of school each year, most of them Roma.

Education Quality

Access to education is also directly affected by the quality of schooling, as students may be deterred from attending school if the quality is low. Uneven quality of education also affects equity. There is evidence that the quality of education for Roma students is lower than for the rest of the population. The following discusses

aspects of education systems in the region which influence quality including the prevalence of “special schools,” the segregation of Roma students within the mainstream system, and inadequate teacher training and curriculum (Box 2.5).

One of the most damaging legacies of the socialist era is the tendency to channel children into special schools for the mentally and physically handicapped. This policy had its roots in the socialist legacy of “defectology” which assumed that differences among students were due to disability rather than environmental conditions and, as a result, should be addressed as medical problems in institutions separated from the rest of society (Ainscow and Memmenasha 1998). The legacy has been the persistence of a parallel system of schools which provide lower quality education and fewer opportunities in post-basic education and the labor market than mainstream schools.

Evidence of this practice is widespread. Data for the Czech Republic are striking. Estimates for 1997 indicate that 64 percent of Roma children in primary school are in special schools, in compar-

Box 2.5: Entrance to Remedial Special Schools in the Czech Republic

Roma children end up in special schools for many reasons. A study in the Czech Republic found that because of discrimination and the highly discretionary nature of the entrance process, many more Roma children end up in special schools than the regulations should allow.

Children can be enrolled directly into special schools, or transferred from a mainstream basic school. By law, placement is based upon the recommendation of the school director in consultation with the parent and an educational psychologist. In some cases parental consent is not obtained, or is abused. Parents may not realize that they are authorizing their children to be shifted into a special school:

“My daughter is in the second year of basic school. She is doing alright. One day in November 1997 her teacher came to see me saying, “We want to move her to another class which will be better for her.” He gave me a piece of paper to sign. I should have read it but it was long and I didn’t think a teacher would try to cheat us, so I just signed it...The next day I got a letter saying that my daughter had been moved to a remedial special school.” Roma parent, Prague.

Educational psychologists play a pivotal role in determining whether children will be sent to special schools. They recommend students for examination and administer the exams. These procedures were found to be highly discretionary. In some cases children were even transferred without the required psychological exam. The tests themselves are problematic, psychologists may use a number of different instruments, many of which are culturally biased.

Because of the widespread abuses that have been documented, parents of 18 Roma children from the Czech town of Ostrava initiated legal proceedings against the government last year. The Czech Constitutional Court ruled in favor of the government. An appeals process opened in April 2000 in front of the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg.

Source: ERRC 1999.

ison with 4 percent for the total population. In other words, Roma are fifteen times more likely to end up in special schools than the national average (ERRC 1999). Similarly, in Hungary about half the number of students enrolled in special schools are Roma (Radó 1997; 2001).

Regardless of the quality of teaching in special schools, students enrolled in these institutions are at a disadvantage. The curriculum is less rigorous and expectations are lower. A detailed report on the Czech schools notes that students in special schools receive fewer Czech language lessons per week, and are not expected to read for comprehension until the fourth grade—while the expectation is first grade for students in mainstream schools (ERRC 1999).

Opportunities for graduates of special schools are also limited. Even if children are able to overcome low expectations, they are not allowed equal access to school-leaving exams. In the Czech Republic, graduates from special schools

are only allowed to enter technical secondary schools, which offer limited training in narrowly defined fields. Students are then dually challenged on the labor market, as employers look unfavorably upon graduates of special schools, and technical training fails to adequately prepare young people for the labor market.

There is growing recognition that the existence of special schools adversely affects the integration and educational development of Roma children. However, the obstacles to change are notable. Not only does resistance to integration come from non-Roma parents and education officials who fear that increasing the share of Roma children in a classroom will lower the quality of education for non-Roma students but opposition comes from Roma parents as well. Special schools can be attractive to poor Roma families for economic reasons, in that school meals and—for residential institutions, housing—are provided. Special schools are also viewed by some parents as

safe havens—free from discrimination that is more pervasive in mainstream schools.

Even where Roma children are kept within the mainstream school system, they are often separated into separate classes, or schools. This is frequently related to geography if Roma families live together in a neighborhood. However, there is also evidence of further separation of Roma. In Bulgaria “Roma schools” are schools in which the share of Roma is over 50 percent. The overrepresentation of Roma in these schools is due to geographic concentration, and attempts by some municipal and education officials to place Roma students together into separate schools.

A recent survey conducted by the Open Society Institute in Sofia found more than 60 elementary, 350 primary and 9 secondary schools in the country in which Roma comprise between 50 and 100 percent of the student body. In general, quality and conditions in Roma schools are poorer than in mainstream schools, infrastructure has deteriorated and materials are lacking (Denkov, et al. 2001). There are also serious problems with attendance in Roma schools. Teachers from Haskovo noted some Roma students had not attended class for an entire year. Similarly, fieldwork in Romania found situations in which non-Roma parents would request that their children be taught in classes without Roma students, and teachers would divide up classes to keep Roma separate (World Bank 2000d).

Discrimination against Roma by non-Roma parents, children, and teachers contributes to low attendance and can both discourage children from attending school and affect the quality of education in the classroom. Stereotypes about Roma and their attitudes toward education lower teachers’ expectations about the potential of their students. Discrimination can be both explicit—as in the case of schools creating separate classes—or more subtle if parents discourage their children from interacting with Roma classmates. A study of the Czech system documented cases in which Roma children had been abused by education staff. One parent from Prague noted that “The teachers who teach Gypsy children are fine, but the others are terrible. They chase our chil-

dren out of the dining room and insult them” (ERRC 1999).

HEALTH STATUS

Data on the health status of Roma is scarce and fragmented. However, the information that does exist paints a bleak picture, pointing to significant gaps in health status between the Roma and non-Roma populations. Because of the absence of data, it is difficult to discuss trends in health during the transition period. On aggregate, Roma are estimated to live around ten years less than the majority populations in Central and Eastern Europe (Braham 1993). Because of substandard living conditions, Roma communities are particularly susceptible to communicable diseases, including hepatitis and tuberculosis. Very little is known about the incidence of non-communicable diseases among Roma. There are increasing indications that Roma have a higher incidence of health problems associated with unhealthy life styles, including drug and alcohol addiction, and HIV/AIDS.

Data on life expectancy and mortality for Roma indicate significantly worse health conditions than for the rest of the population. Estimates derived from the Czechoslovak census data for the 1990s found that life expectancy for the total population was 67 years for men and 74 for women, while for the Roma the figures were 55 and 60 (ECOHST 2000). In Hungary the life expectancy gap is estimated at 10 to 15 years. A study conducted in Pest County documented that Roma men lived 13 years less and women 12 years less than non-Roma inhabitants. Estimates of infant mortality rates show a similar gulf. In the Czech and Slovak Republics infant mortality for Roma was double that of non-Roma. However, in Hungary, infant mortality for Roma has declined faster than that of the total population, and the gap between Roma and non-Roma has narrowed. While infant mortality was 38 per thousand births for the total population and nearly 118 for Roma in 1970, this decreased to 17 for the whole population and 21 for Roma by 1990 (Puporka and Zádori 1999).

Demographic Trends

Roma have historically had significantly higher population growth than other groups. This has been—and continues to be—a sensitive political issue because across the region the size of the Roma population is growing much faster than the non-Roma population. In 1958, the Czechoslovak government issued a decree stating that Roma were not a distinct ethnic group, but rather were a people “maintaining a markedly different demographic structure” (Fraser 1995). Roma women marry at a younger age and begin having children earlier than other groups. This has serious consequences for women’s reproductive health. The precise roots of high fertility among Roma are unknown, but likely result from socioeconomic factors, including poverty, low education levels, and cultural preferences.

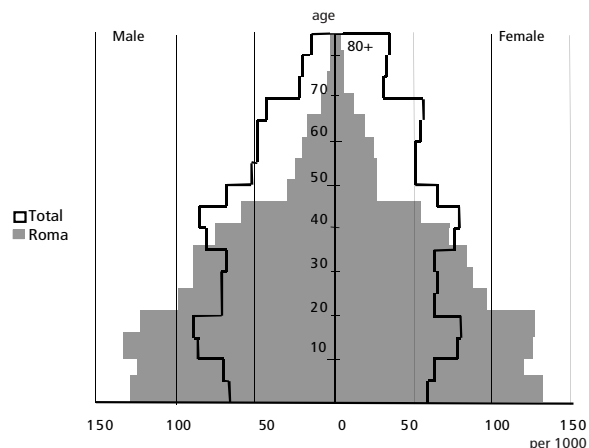
Because of higher birth rates, the Roma community is significantly younger than other groups. Data from two representative surveys of Roma conducted in Hungary illustrate this phenomenon (Puporka and Zádori 1999).¹⁴ In 1993, 39 percent of the Roma population was under 14 years old, while only 19 percent of the total population fell into this age group. In contrast, 19 percent of the total population was over 60, while only 5 percent of Roma fell into this category. Birth rates among Roma are much higher than those of other groups. Age pyramids from the 1991 Czechoslovak census illustrate a similar phenomenon (Figure 2.4).

Evidence on demographic trends for Roma during the transition period is mixed. While overall fertility has declined significantly in Central and Eastern Europe, it is not clear whether this also holds true for Roma. Fertility has dropped in some Hungarian Roma communities (Puporka and Zádori 1999), while a study in Bulgaria found that birth rates were increasing among the poorer subgroups of Roma (Tomova 2000). Regardless of these contrasting messages, the available data suggest that Roma families remain larger than those of other ethnic groups.

Reproductive Health

High infant mortality and perinatal death rates for Roma are linked to women’s reproductive

Figure 2.4: Age Structure of Roma and the Total Population in the Czech Republic, 1991



Source: Census data, from ECOHOST 2000.

health. Due to inadequate access to care, unhealthy lifestyles—including poor living conditions and nutrition—and high birth and abortion rates, Roma women are at a higher risk of complications during pregnancy than non-Roma women. A study conducted in Szabolcs-Szatmar County in Hungary in the 1980s found that Roma women were twice as likely to have difficulties during pregnancy, as well as premature births and low birth weight babies, than non-Roma women (Puporka and Zádori 1999). Similarly, a study conducted in a district in the Slovak Republic in 1995–1997 found low birth weights for Roma to be more than double that of non-Roma (ECOHOST 2000).

Women’s health is a serious issue. Because of low levels of awareness about health issues and impoverishment among many communities, Roma women face other health challenges—also common to the general population—including inadequate nutrition and high levels of smoking during pregnancy (OSCE 2000). The Hungarian survey mentioned above found that 63 percent of pregnant women were smokers (Puporka and Zádori 1999).

Awareness about contraception varies across Roma communities. The qualitative study for Romania found that better off Roma women were more likely to use contraception (Rughinis 2000).

Another study, also in Romania, by *Médicins Sans Frontières* indicated that many Roma women preferred IUDs because they gave them more independence (OSCE 2000). As is the case throughout the former socialist countries, abortion is much more common than in the West, and is used as contraception. In 1997 abortion rates ranged from 63 abortions per 100 live births in the Czech Republic, to 135 in Bulgaria and 147 in Romania (UNICEF 1999). Small-scale studies in the Slovak Republic and Bulgaria suggest that abortion rates are higher for Roma than non-Roma women (ECOHOST 2000; Tomova 1998). The issue of forced sterilization of Roma women has gained international attention. A recent study documented cases of women who had been sterilized against their will by doctors in Eastern Slovakia (Center for Reproductive Rights 2003). The government is currently investigating this issue.

Communicable Diseases

Poor living conditions, such as overcrowding and lack of adequate sanitation facilities make Roma communities more susceptible to infectious diseases than other groups. Reports of epidemics of hepatitis, tuberculosis, and parasitic diseases were common, during and after the socialist period. Skin diseases, such as eczema are also common. The last reported cases of poliomyelitis in Bulgaria, Romania, and FYR Macedonia all were in Roma communities (OSCE 2000). In Bulgaria in 1992, 90 Roma children in the regions of Sliven and Sotirya caught poliomyelitis. There were no cases among Bulgarians. In 1993 a diphtheria outbreak occurred in the same areas (Tomova 2000).

In the 1990s a number of hepatitis outbreaks have been documented in Roma settlements in the Czech Republic and Hungary. In 1990, an outbreak was recorded in Brno, in the Czech Republic and 1999 in central Moravia 40 children in a Roma settlement were hospitalized with the disease (ECOHOST 2000). Hepatitis B, a more dangerous form of hepatitis, has been found to have an even higher incidence in Hungary among Roma. Among pregnant women routinely screened for hepatitis B in Hungary, approximately half tested positive and the majority were Roma (Puporka and Zádori 1999).

Tuberculosis is on the rise throughout the region. Hungary recorded a 20 percent increase between 1990 and 1995. Tuberculosis risk is associated with poor living conditions, putting some Roma communities at higher risk. In the 1960s, a study in the western part of the Slovak Republic found that the prevalence of tuberculosis among Roma was higher than for the majority population (ECOHOST 2000). However, there are no indications currently that incidence is higher among Roma. Reports from physicians working in one of the main tuberculosis hospitals in Hungary found that Roma women were more susceptible to tuberculosis than men (Puporka and Zádori 1999).

Another worrying trend has been outbreaks of measles among Roma in the Slovak Republic and Hungary, which may have been due to lapses in immunization coverage. Aggregate immunization rates throughout the region are high, reaching nearly full coverage. However, gaps in immunizations in Roma communities have been documented. In a study of Roma in Bulgaria, 11 percent of households reported that their children had not been vaccinated, with the rate nearly 20 percent in the poorest sites (Tomova 2000).

Congenital Disorders

Research on congenital disorders among Roma is sparse and frequently problematic. A review of literature on health among Roma in the Czech and the Slovak Republics noted that some research was tainted by concepts of contagion and “social Darwinist” motivations. The studies focused on identifying race-based inferiorities among the Roma (ECOHOST 2000). Nevertheless, the prevalence of genetic diseases among Roma is a valid concern, particularly since some groups of Roma have remained relatively isolated from the majority populations and a high degree of intermarriage has been documented in some communities. The extent of this is not known.¹⁵

Non-Communicable Diseases

Very little information on non-communicable diseases among Roma is available. Across Central and Eastern Europe, mortality from non-communicable diseases is high—particularly conditions associated with unhealthy lifestyles such as poor

nutrition, smoking, and alcoholism (Staines 1999). Some Roma communities may be particularly susceptible to these conditions because of lifestyles. Prevalence of smoking, alcoholism, and poor diets are reported to be higher among some Roma communities. Another study in Hungary found that smoking was exceptionally high among Roma, and particularly among Roma women. A survey of students in a Roma school in Hungary found that 85 percent of students between 15 and 22 had tried cigarettes, and 45 percent smoked an average of a package of cigarettes per day (Puporka and Zádori 1999).

Although little information is available, occupational injuries and environmental conditions are also likely sources of ill health among Roma. As the lowest skilled jobs were also most likely to be the most hazardous, many Roma were employed in dangerous professions during the socialist period, including mining and other aspects of heavy industry, such as working with toxic substances. The incidence of disability from workplace injury is thought to be disproportionately high among Roma. Similarly, exposure to hazardous materials and highly polluted regions is also an issue for Roma, as many live or work in areas of dumpsites, mines and abandoned factories. A report described conditions in the eastern Slovak town of Rudnaný, where 500 Roma are living in an abandoned iron and mercury mine. The area is known to be highly contaminated (Erlanger 2000). Many Roma engage in recycling activities, including trading in scrap materials. In a highly publicized case in Hungary, Roma supported themselves by melting down batteries. This created serious pollution which was blamed for a child's death from lead poisoning (Puporka and Zádori 1999).

Nutrition

Unhealthy diets are an important contributor to poor health status across Central and Eastern Europe (Galloway, Rokx, and Brown 2000). Because of low socioeconomic status Roma are more susceptible to unhealthy dietary habits associated with poverty and low public health awareness. A 1997 study of nutrition among children in the Czech Republic found that the nutri-

tional intake of Roma was worse than that of Czech children. Roma had inadequate consumption of vegetables, dairy products, grains, and meats. On the other hand, Roma children were found to consume four-and-a-half times the recommended daily allowance of snack foods containing fat and sugar (ECOHOST 2000). Improper nutrition for children can adversely effect growth and future development. Some evidence of stunting among Roma has already been documented. A study of the growth of children in the eastern part of the Slovak Republic found that Roma children developed more slowly than Slovak children of the same age (ECOHOST 2000).

Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs) and Drug Abuse

There is very little information on the prevalence of STDs and drug abuse among Roma communities. Prostitution and trafficking of women with western Europe has been on the rise during the transition in Central and Eastern Europe (UNICEF 1999). Women have resorted to employment in the sex industry as result of the dearth of employment opportunities elsewhere. Estimates reported for the Czech Republic suggested that out of the nearly 40,000 prostitutes in the country, some 25,000 are Roma women (ECOHOST 2000). Prostitution increases the risk of STDs, including HIV/AIDS for the Roma community at large. However, to date there is no information on disease incidence. A study of Roma in Miskolc, Hungary found that Roma were uninformed about the risk of AIDS and the options for prevention (Puporka and Zádori 1999).

Drug abuse is on the rise among some Roma groups. Information is scarce because—although the number of addicts is thought to be high—Roma are generally less likely to seek help at testing and counseling clinics and are not counted (ECOHOST 2000). The head of the Drug Prevention Center in Budapest estimated that 20 percent of patients treated in his clinic are Roma. He categorized Roma drug users into two groups, young children between 9 and 12, who are addicted to sniffing glue, and older addicts, usually over age 19, who use “hard drugs” including heroin, cocaine, speed, and LSD (Puporka and Zádori

1999). Drug usage and trade may be most prevalent among communities in border areas, as is the case in the Black Sea region of Bulgaria (Box 2.6).

CONCLUSIONS

The evidence suggests that the roots of pervasive Roma poverty are closely linked to low education levels, limited employment opportunities, and more unfavourable health status. The unfavourable starting point of Roma at the outset of the transition period—with low education levels and overrepresentation among low-skilled jobs—has led to disadvantages on the labor market. Compounded by discrimination and low expectations of employers, Roma have had more difficulty re-entering the job market than other groups, and have consequently become caught in a vicious circle of impoverishment. The next two chapters examine these issues further at the coun-

try level through case studies. Persistent disadvantages in education, including low school attendance and overrepresentation in special schools, which limit future opportunities, create a high probability that without policy interventions the next generation of Roma will continue to remain in poverty.

NOTES

1. The analysis of the Yale survey included in this chapter draws from Revenga, Ringold and Tracy, 2002.

2. For more on measuring poverty, see Ravallion 1993.

3. Such as the Luxembourg Income Study.

4. The official World Bank poverty rates are US\$1 and US\$2 per day, however because of higher heating costs in the Europe Central Asia region, the higher rates of \$2.15 and \$4.30 are

Box 2.6: Heroin Addiction in Varna, Bulgaria

The Black Sea port city of Varna is the third largest city in Bulgaria. According to the 1992 Census, 1.3 percent of the population identified as Roma, but the actual number is thought to be significantly higher. Because of its location on the Black Sea, informal trading opportunities with neighboring countries are rife and recent evidence from the Maksouda Quarter, a Roma mahala on the western outskirts of the city, indicates a flourishing drug trade, particularly in heroin.

The Maksouda Quarter dates back at least 100 years to Ottoman times. Formerly a camp for nomadic Roma, the Quarter grew rapidly with the establishment of a textile factory at the turn of the century, and additional employment opportunities provided by the Varna ship-yards during the socialist period. The population reached 15,000 by the 1970s. Informal sector activity has been prevalent, even under the socialist regime because of the large numbers of foreign tourists in Varna who are attracted by popular beach resorts, and opportunities for travel to other Black Sea border states. Among other ventures, currency trading, “trader-tourism” in clothing and other goods, and prostitution are common.

According to estimates by the police and doctors at the Varna Medical University, there were approximately 750 Roma heroin users in Maksouda in 1999. The users are predominately young between 13 and 35 years old, with two-thirds between 15 and 25. While a few began using heroin before 1989, serious trade and usage of heroin took off after the transition with the increase in travel opportunities. Drugs, including heroin, marijuana, and cocaine are either bought abroad, or brought in by traders from countries.

“There wasn’t such a thing before. But when this democracy came, it began all of a sudden. It is mainly people from poor families that became addicts. There are also some from rich families, but not so many.” Milko, 40 years old.

More recently, addicts have shifted from smoking and inhaling heroin to intravenous injections. While no cases of HIV have been reported yet, there have been hepatitis outbreaks among users. The university hospital in Varna has a clinic for substance abuse, and many users interviewed identified it as an important source of help and hope for breaking the cycle of addiction.

Source: Konstantinov 1999.

more appropriate for the countries analyzed in this report.

5. Further information on the methodology used in this analysis can be found in Revenga, Ringold, and Tracy 2002.

6. The dataset allows for multiple definitions of Roma ethnicity. For the analysis, the broadest definition of Roma is used. If either the individual, or the interviewer indicated that the individual was Roma using any of the criteria included in the survey, all members of the household are assumed to be Roma for the purposes of the analysis.

7. The US and European literature on poverty and social exclusion finds that socially or economically excluded groups may often adopt behavior patterns that differ from the majority population, and which affect the return to productive endowments and the overall welfare of the excluded population (Loury, 1999; Silver 1994).

8. This issue is discussed further in the next chapter on Slovakia.

9. A highly publicized attempt was made by the city of Kosice in the Slovak Republic, which sought to move people who were not paying rent (largely Roma) to the Lunik IX neighborhood, a housing development on the outskirts of the town (OSCE 2000).

10. Results from the Romania Integrated Household Survey, 1998.

11. This reflects the fact that more Roma in the Bulgarian sample live in Roma settlements, where housing conditions are generally poorer than in more integrated neighborhoods.

12. For a discussion of labor market dynamics in the early transition see Allison and Ringold 1996; and Commander and Coricelli 1995.

13. Employment rates are not comparable across countries because of differences in definition of the working-age population.

14. Birth rates are not ideal measures, as they do not account for the age distribution, however fertility rates were not available.

15. The Romanian case study of Babadag found a high rate of intermarriage (Rughinis 2000).

Chapter Three:

POVERTY AND EXCLUSION: ROMA SETTLEMENTS IN THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC

The situation of Roma in Slovakia is unique in a number of respects.¹ More Roma in Slovakia live in settlements, on the outskirts of villages and towns, than in other countries in the region. Many of these settlements are rooted in exclusionary policies adopted during the Second World War and early socialist period which curbed the rights of Slovak Roma in many ways, including housing. Regulations allowed Roma to enter towns and villages only on certain days and at specific times, and ordered them to move their homes a minimum distance of two kilometers from all public roads. This policy formed the basis for the establishment of many Roma settlements which still exist in Slovakia today (Box 3.1).

The geographic and ethnic characteristics of settlements vary significantly. An estimated one-quarter of Roma in Slovakia live in settlements, many of which are in the poorer, eastern regions of the country. The actual number is difficult to gauge, because of the difficulties in measuring the Roma population and defining a “settlement.” Living conditions for Roma in settlements are generally worse than for the rest of the Roma population. In this chapter, a settlement refers to a group of people living together in a distinct geographic area, either within or outside of a town or village.

As highlighted in the previous chapter, Roma poverty is multidimensional, encompassing many aspects beyond low income. This chapter explores interrelated aspects of Roma poverty and vulnerability further, including the material dimensions of poverty—nutrition, clothing, and housing—access to opportunities in the labor market, and social services. It discusses the particular nature of exclusion experienced by Roma in settlements in Slovakia.

The chapter aims to address information gaps by bringing together findings from qualitative case studies of Roma settlements with existing surveys. Sociological fieldwork was undertaken to supplement the incomplete picture given by the quantitative data. Indeed, there is currently no quantitative survey which allows for an assessment of Roma living conditions in Slovakia. This is the first of the chapters in this volume which draws upon country level qualitative analysis. The chapter first provides historical background and current data on the population of Roma in Slovakia. It then describes the nature of poverty in Roma settlements, their labor market status and coping strategies. Finally, the chapter addresses access to public services, including education and social assistance.

ROMA IN SLOVAKIA

Historical Background

The oldest references to Roma living on the territory of the Slovak Republic date back to 1322. Roma came to the area as settlers and nomadic groups with travel permits issued by the Holy Roman Emperor and the Pope. Roma who settled in Slovakia worked as castle musicians, metalworkers, and served in the Hungarian royal armies. Anti-Roma policies began to emerge in the fifteenth century in Europe and intensified in the Hungarian kingdom in the sixteenth century, after the Turkish occupation of central Hungary, when Roma were thought to be Turkish spies. As a result, Roma settlers were restricted to living on the outskirts of towns and villages, and metalworkers were allowed to sell only a limited quantity of goods.²

Restrictive policies continued during the early Austro-Hungarian Empire in the eighteenth

Box 3.1: The Study of Roma Settlements in Slovakia

A qualitative study by Slovak sociologists of conditions in Roma settlements in three contrasting districts in Slovakia form the basis of this chapter. In each district, fieldwork involved in-depth interviews with individuals, households, and local public figures—including teachers, doctors, social assistance workers, religious leaders and local government officials. The research was conducted between December 2000 and January 2001.

The study examined the characteristics and correlates of poverty, conditions in the settlements, and the experience of Roma in these areas. Although the survey is not representative, the results provide a snapshot of the conditions of Roma in geographically and socio-economically diverse locations. The districts were ranked based upon unemployment levels and the share of the population receiving social assistance. The districts were:

Malacky: A better off district with below average unemployment (13.5 percent in 1999) and share of population receiving social assistance benefits. Malacky is in the Bratislava Region near the capital city. There are very few segregated settlements in Malacky.

Stará Ľubovňa: An average region in terms of unemployment, social assistance beneficiaries and composition of Roma settlements. The district is located in eastern Slovakia in the Prešov Region where the concentration of Roma is high.

Rimavská Sobota: A relatively poor district in the Banská Bystrica Region, with a high level of unemployment (35 percent in 1999) and a high share of the population receiving social assistance.

The study looks at poverty including the lack of access to education and employment, income insecurity, social exclusion, and the lack of opportunities for participation in civil society. Poverty is defined in different ways, based upon self-assessment, and the interviewers' assessment of material conditions—including housing conditions, nutrition, health care, and access to public services. These measures are inherently subjective and the interviewers' assessments of poverty did not always coincide with those of the households being interviewed.

Source: World Bank, Foundation SPACE, INEKO, and the Open Society Institute 2002.

century. Leopold I declared Roma to be outlaws and ordered all Roma men to be hanged. Policies changed under Empress Maria Theresa, and Joseph II, her son and successor. Both sought to assimilate Roma as citizens within the Empire. Legislative measures required Roma to settle, pay taxes, and provide compulsory service to local landowners. Other edicts included mandated school and church attendance and improvement of housing infrastructure.

These policies were the first step toward settling the Roma, a feature that still distinguishes Roma in Central and Eastern Europe from those living in Western Europe. Although these policies aimed, sometimes aggressively, at assimilation, they also represented the first time that Roma were treated as state citizens. Austro-Hungarian

measures were used as models for other European countries, which aimed to assimilate Roma in the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries.

WORLD WAR II. The first Czechoslovak Republic (1918–1938) passed legislation which limited the mobility and civil rights of Roma, particularly nomadic and homeless groups. Laws mandated identification cards and fingerprinting. Conditions deteriorated substantially during World War II. Like Jews, Roma throughout Europe were targeted with discriminatory legislation, and subsequently extermination under the “Final Solution.” During the course of the “Devouring,” as Roma called the Holocaust, approximately one-half million Roma from across Europe were killed.

The experience of Roma in the Czech and Slovak Republics during the Holocaust differed significantly. The majority of Czech Roma were killed in concentration camps.³ In contrast, fewer Roma from Slovakia were deported to camps, although many were sent to forced labor camps. In 1941, several labor camps were established for Roma, where workers lived under extremely poor conditions.

After Slovakia was invaded by the German army in September 1944, the situation for Slovak Roma became increasingly dire. Mass executions were carried out in several towns and villages, and Roma living in the south and southeastern parts of Slovakia, annexed to Hungary during the war, were transported to the concentration camp at Dachau.

After World War II, large numbers of Roma migrated from Slovakia into the Czech lands in search of better living conditions and employment. In many cases, migration was driven by state policies which forced Roma out of certain areas. Over several years, more than 15,000 Roma migrated westward. As a result, the majority of Roma living in the Czech Republic today are originally from Slovakia.

THE SOCIALIST PERIOD. The Czechoslovak socialist regime, which came to power after the war, adopted policies aimed at assimilating Roma and eliminating ethnic differences. These measures left behind a legacy that has affected the socio-economic status of Roma into the transition period. The government refused to officially recognize Roma as an ethnic minority, but rather identified them as "citizens of a gypsy origin." Without the rank of ethnic minority, Roma lacked certain legal and cultural rights. Among other constraints, this implied that Roma cultural activities were banned. Roma were not allowed to establish their own music ensembles, youth or sports clubs. Roma folk songs were not allowed to be sung at schools, and Roma books and magazines were banned.

Assimilation policies in the areas of housing, employment, and school attendance were stringent and aggressive. In 1959, the government embarked upon a violent campaign against

nomadism, and drew up plans for a "dispersal and transfer" scheme which aimed to resettle Roma from areas in eastern Slovakia to the Czech lands. This program was never fully implemented, although many Roma families were transported to the Czech Republic against their will. The program was coordinated by a *Commission for the Problems of the Gypsy Population in Slovakia*, which was established in 1966 under the auspices of the Presidium of the Slovak National Council. In 1967 alone, 3,178 Roma were resettled from Slovakia. Of that number, a total of 1,034 Roma returned to Slovakia within the same year.

To combat nomadism, state officials broke up caravans, sometimes slaughtering horses in the middle of the night (Fraser 1995). Policies relaxed somewhat during the period of the Prague Spring reforms in 1968. Roma began to form official organizations for the first time, and approximately 200 Roma musical groups and 30 football clubs were established.⁴ Forced migration and resettlement policies resumed following the Soviet crackdown in 1969. Between 1972 and 1980, 4,000 Roma dwellings were destroyed and 4,850 Roma were resettled.

Efforts to improve school attendance were similarly forced. Regulations were issued to implement compulsory schooling. Since the objectives were not communicated to parents, they tended to view school attendance as an externally imposed obligation. School attendance did increase dramatically. In 1971 only 17 percent of Roma finished compulsory education; by 1980 this number increased to 26 percent. However, many were enrolled in "special schools" intended for the mentally and physically disabled. These practices have persisted, and large numbers of Roma children in both the Czech and Slovak Republics still study in special schools.

ROMA IN SLOVAKIA AFTER 1989. With the Velvet Revolution in November 1989, came new opportunities for minorities to express their ethnic identity and participate in civil society. In January 1991 the new Declaration of Basic Human Rights and Freedoms adopted by the Czechoslovak Federal Assembly allowed for the free determination of ethnic identity. Subsequently, in April, the gov-

ernment of the Slovak Republic adopted "The Principles of Government Policy Regarding Roma." For the first time in history, Roma were recognized as an independent ethnic minority, with equal status to that of other minorities living in the Slovak Republic.

The first Roma political party, the Romany Civic Initiative (ROI), was established after the transition in November 1989. Other parties and cultural associations soon followed. In the 1990 parliamentary elections, Roma were elected to parliamentary posts for the first time and other Roma representatives were appointed to positions within the Office of the Government, the Ministry of Culture, and the Ministry of Education.

Government activity related to Roma issues accelerated in the late 1990s, with increased local and international attention. In November 1997, the Slovak cabinet adopted the "Conceptual intents of the Slovak Republic for the solution of the problems of Romany population under current social and economic conditions." The document outlined the issues facing Roma and institutional responsibilities for addressing them.

One of the most significant developments was the establishment of the Office of the Plenipotentiary for Roma Communities after elections in 1998. The Office falls under the jurisdiction of the Deputy Prime Minister for Human Rights, Minorities and Regional Development, and has been headed by a Roma since 1999. The Office is charged with implementing government policy regarding Roma.

In 1999, the new government adopted the "Strategy of the Slovak Government to Solve Problems of the Romany Ethnic Minority and the Set of Implementation Measures." The new document formulated a more detailed action plan for policy measures related to Roma issues. A second phase of this strategy was adopted in May 2000, which further detailed measures to be undertaken. The document charged ministers and heads of regional public administration offices with specific responsibilities. The areas of focus within the strategy were: human rights, education, unemployment, housing, social security, and health. The strategy is limited in that it fails to specify levels and sources of financing for activities.

Population

The Slovak Republic has one of the largest shares of Roma to population in Europe. According to the 2001 census, Roma represent 9.7 percent of the population, making them the second largest minority in the country after Hungarians. As many likely do not report their ethnicity in the census, the actual size of the population is thought to be between 10 and 11 percent of the population, or between 420,000 and 500,000 people. The share of Roma in the population is likely to rise in coming years because of higher birth rates. Demographic projections have indicated that Roma could become a majority of the population in Slovakia by 2060 (Economist 2001).

A survey of district officials estimated that there were 591 Roma settlements in Slovakia in 1998, in comparison with 278 in 1988.⁵ The total number of people living in settlements also has grown dramatically. In 1988 there were approximately 14,988 people living in settlements, and by 1997 this figure had grown to 123,034. During the past decade, some Roma have returned to settlements because of a lack of affordable housing. This, in addition to the high birth rate among Roma living in settlements, largely explains the increase.⁶

The demographic profile of Roma in Slovakia is considerably different from that of the total population. The Roma population is significantly younger and has been growing more rapidly than other ethnic groups. The national birth rate for Slovakia has declined steadily during the transition period from 15.2 live births per 1,000 population in 1990 to 10.7 in 1998 (UNICEF 2000). In contrast, birth rates among Roma have been increasing, especially in the most isolated, segregated settlements. The life expectancy of Roma is considerably lower than the national average, although recent data are not available. Estimates derived from the 1970 and 1980 censuses put life expectancy for Roma at 55 for men and 59 for women, in comparison with 67 for men in the total population and 74 for women (ECOHOST 2000).

POVERTY IN ROMA SETTLEMENTS

In general, there are three types of settlements, based upon living arrangements between

Roma and non-Roma. First are completely integrated towns and villages. This was the case of Nová Ľubovňa in the district of Stará Ľubovňa, a district of average development in the east of the country. Second are separated areas, where Roma live together within a town or village, either on the outskirts, or within a particular street or neighborhood, as in Studienka in Malacky. Finally, segregated settlements are situated outside of a village or town, such as Kyjatice in the district of Rimavská Sobota, a settlement three kilometers from the nearest town. These definitions are subjective and were used to document general patterns. In particular, the distinction between separated and segregated settlements is frequently blurred.

This study found that poverty has different characteristics in the Roma and non-Roma populations in Slovakia. Poverty among Roma is closely linked to four main factors: (i) regional economic conditions; (ii) the size and concentration of the Roma population in a settlement; (iii) the share of Roma in a settlement; and (iv) the degree of geographic integration or segregation of the settlement and its proximity to a neighboring village or town.

The situation of Roma in more economically developed regions is generally more favorable than that of Roma in poorer areas. For example, in 1999 the living conditions of Roma in Malacky, a district with a lower unemployment rate (14 percent) than the national average of 17 percent and close to Bratislava (less than 50 km), were better than conditions in Rimavská Sobota, a district with 35 percent unemployment. Roma houses in segregated settlements in Malacky resembled those of the majority population. They were generally made of solid materials such as bricks, and had access to electricity. In contrast, housing conditions in settlements in Rimavská Sobota were poorer, lacked access to basic services, and had worse health and education status worse.

Within regions, the level of poverty in a Roma settlement appears to be closely connected to its geographic location, and the level of ethnic integration and segregation. Conditions in settlements which consisted only of Roma were significantly worse than in more integrated communities. This

leads to a vicious cycle: the more isolated and segregated the settlement, the more severe and deep the poverty, the fewer opportunities residents have to leave and work outside of the settlement, and consequently the higher the chances are that Roma will continue to live in isolated settlements and, consequently, remain in poverty.

This level of spatial separation is positively correlated to the level of poverty. The social status of Roma living in segregated settlements is considerably lower than that of those who are integrated among the majority population. Roma living in segregated settlements in marginalized regions are significantly worse off than those who live in segregated settlements in more developed and economically better off regions.

The concentration of Roma also matters. The level of poverty in areas with a higher share of Roma in the population is higher than in areas where the population density of Roma is lower. Poverty among Roma in districts where at least five percent of the population was “officially” classified as Roma (which likely underestimates the true population), was consistently worse than those for the region as a whole.

With the exception of Roma in completely integrated areas and some in separated settlements in better off regions, high unemployment and dependence on social assistance were common in Roma settlements. While the national unemployment rate was 18 percent in 2000, in the qualitative sample, it was approximately 85 percent. This was due to the inclusion of segregated settlements in the sample where unemployment often reaches almost 100 percent.

The theme of contrasts between Roma living in segregated and integrated areas cuts through this chapter. In general, Roma in integrated areas are less poor than Roma in settlements and have greater access to opportunities in the labor market and education. Conversely, Roma living in isolated and marginalized settlements have limited chances for upward mobility and interactions with the rest of society. As conditions within settlements appear to be worsening over time, and the population living in settlements is growing, some observers have noted the emergence of an “underclass” of Roma in Slovakia, who are being

left behind in the processes of economic and political transition. The following sections explore the extent of poverty among Roma, its roots and correlates.

Perceptions of Poverty

Roma in urban and rural areas define poverty in both relative and concrete terms (Box 3.2). For most Roma poverty is a recent phenomenon, and they describe their living conditions mainly in relation to the past. Although none of those interviewed described themselves as well off before 1989, most felt that they had lived decently relative to prevailing living standards. A minority said that they had always been “poor.” The most salient difference with the communist period for older Roma was that they all had jobs.

Roma associate the previous regime with an abundance of job opportunities and benefits including subsidized consumer goods, utilities, and animals for breeding. Roma also recall having more housing options and better relationships between citizens. A Roma respondent reflected, “People are not as willing to help each other as they used to be because everyone has troubles today.” Another noted: “During communism we were better off because everyone had to work, even if it was pointless or unskilled work.”

Many Roma also related their descriptions of poverty to their current circumstances. Roma living in segregated, as well as many in separated areas, explained that the worst aspects of their present situation were: poor housing conditions, overcrowding, lack of infrastructure, poor health,

Box 3.2: Typology of Perceptions of Social Status

Roma in the Slovak study can be categorized into four groups based upon their perceptions of their social status:

Non-Poor: These Roma do not consider themselves poor, but rather view themselves as average Slovaks. They believe that there are many people who are worse off, and that the transition has not led to dramatic changes in their lives: “The only difference between Christmas today and Christmas during the Communist period is that today there are fewer presents.” The problems, in their view, are national, including inflation, unemployment and subsequent constraints on living standards. This group constitutes a small share of the respondents living in integrated areas (e.g. approximately 25 percent in Malacky), who are either employed or engaged in the informal economy.

Subjectively poor: This group can be characterized by the statement: “We are not rich but we are able to support ourselves.” This is typical of integrated Roma who believe that the demographic groups hit most severely by poverty include elderly people, young families, and Roma from Eastern Slovakia. Their views about more segregated Roma are similar to the non-Roma view of Roma: “People there are worse off than dogs, but they are to blame. They should take better care of themselves. When they don’t have a job, they should at least keep themselves and their house clean.” The majority of people expressing these views had a better starting point after 1989; they lived in integrated localities in better off regions, and mostly own their homes.

Relatively poor: These Roma perceive themselves to be poor and are generally unemployed, living on social benefits: “It is bad without a job, we live from one day to another.” Most lived in integrated and partially separated types of settlements, and face difficulties in re-entering the labor market because of low education levels: “I have no clue what could help us out. If we could turn back time we would get a proper vocational training or move to another country. People on TV say that everybody is doing better there and that everybody has a job.”

Absolutely poor: This group of poor live mostly in segregated settlements in marginalized regions. They express a strong sense of apathy and helplessness and feel totally excluded from mainstream society: “We have nothing here, no roads, no electricity, no running water, no job. Nobody helps us either, not the mayor, or even the priest in the village.” Some receive social assistance benefits, however, in certain cases some have lost eligibility because they lack documentation and official residency status.

lack of adequate food and clothing, lack of a reliable social network, unemployment, and social exclusion. A Roma respondent from a separated settlement explained: “We are poor because we don’t have a proper house, we don’t have any money and have no one to borrow from.”

It was common for households living in poor segregated settlements to identify food insecurity as a main element of their poverty. One woman explained that it was difficult for her to feed her children properly all the time: “We have no cash most of the month to buy food on a regular basis and nobody will give us anything. Here we all have the same condition.” Generally, Roma from segregated settlements in marginalized regions associated poverty with material insecurity, while Roma in more developed and integrated regions perceived poverty in relation to secondary needs such as employment, quality education, and a more inclusive society.

Many Roma also compared their situations to those of fellow citizens. Unemployed Roma living close to non-Roma felt much worse off in comparison with others. Roma in villages or towns with non-Roma believed that it was more difficult for them to find work than their non-Roma neighbors. As one said: “nowadays all the work is for gadje.”⁷ In contrast, Roma in segregated settlements were less likely to compare themselves to non-Roma.

INSECURITY AND SHAME. Poverty has important social and psychological components. Respondents living in segregated settlements describe poverty as associated with feelings of defenselessness, and exclusion from the larger community. Poverty for many is also associated with shame. Even those respondents who appeared extremely poor to the interviewers often preferred to define themselves as “close to” but not completely “poor.” For the very poorest, however, “not completely poor” means little more than “not dying of hunger.” These responses have their roots in communism which stigmatized poverty as a consequence of personal failure and laziness.

Many Roma feel that existing institutions are hostile, or at best indifferent, to their predicament. In particular, they lack trust in local governments

and related institutions, mainly social assistance offices, and to a lesser extent schools and health care centers. The majority of Roma living in segregated and separated settlements describe a loss of hope for the future, and a pervasive sense of uncertainty and insecurity.

GENERATIONAL AND GENDER DIFFERENCES. Although young Roma are less likely to compare their situation to the past than their parents, the experience and interpretation of “poverty” does not vary much across generations. Most young people identify the same problems and constraints in their lives as their parents: lack of jobs, adequate education, and a sense of exclusion.

For young married couples, poverty means the inability to live independently from their parents, to start life on their own, and to enjoy privacy and independence. In many settlements, young couples live with their parents, or their inlaws, in one or two rooms with three or four of their siblings. Due to the low availability of housing and high costs, many young Slovaks live with their parents, however circumstances are especially difficult for Roma in poor areas where the size and quality of housing is extremely low.

Perceived poverty among young Roma also has a gender dimension. Some young girls noted that they were worse off than the young men in their communities and had access to fewer opportunities in employment and education. They felt that their only option was to start having children at an early age. A number of young women said that they could not even get unskilled work, while young men in their communities could at least participate in public works or unskilled jobs. These patterns reflect barriers to employment for young women, as well as traditional gender roles for women in closed communities.

The poorest respondents identified common elements of poverty, including: inadequate nutrition (e.g. sufficient food and nutritional composition), poor housing, and ill health. The ability to provide a good education for their children and lead a better life—for example, having opportunities to travel—were also identified by some Roma as important, but this took second place to the more immediate issues of hunger and shelter.

Material Dimensions of Poverty

HUNGER AND NUTRITION. Prior to 1989, very few households had difficulty obtaining basic food-stuffs, because of near-full employment and subsidized consumer goods. These circumstances have changed. Roma households in the poorest settlements reported difficulties in affording sufficient food and maintaining adequate nutrition. Child malnutrition, in particular, was a frequent problem. Researchers observed evidence of stunting among some children. Some teachers reported that Roma children do not receive school lunches because their parents are unable to pay. The director of a school in Stará Lubovňa noted that “in the entire primary school only one child goes to lunch at school.”

Some elderly Roma also reported problems in maintaining adequate food intake and explained that they were unable to afford necessary foods because of the low levels of welfare benefits. An elderly Roma man from the village of Rimavská Píla related that he had to maintain a high protein diet for medical reasons, but could not afford it.

Roma in integrated and segregated communities have contrasting strategies for ensuring adequate nutrition. Roma in integrated, as well as many in separated areas, prefer to plan ahead and economize in order to secure enough food for the rest of the month, regardless of their employment status. Those who live in rural areas and own land are able to grow vegetables during the summer months, and some do so. The wife of an unemployed Roma man in a community in Stará Lubovňa reported that they tend to buy things which last, such as potatoes and beans in bulk. As much as possible, she makes sure that her children have sufficient food, despite the fact that her husband is unemployed, and they live mainly on social assistance. “Sometimes I buy on credit, but usually I make sure that we have enough to feed our family during the month.”

In contrast, Roma in segregated settlements focus more on their immediate survival and are less able to plan ahead. Consumption tends to increase after social assistance payments are made. A resident of Lipovec in the Rimavská Sobota district noted, “why not eat now that we have money?

It doesn’t matter what comes tomorrow.” A doctor in the town of Podolíneč in Stará Lubovňa, who sees patients from a number of nearby settlements reported that she sometimes sees dehydrated babies. Mothers explain that they have no money for milk after their social assistance benefits run out. Many Roma from marginalized settlements, including some poorer integrated settlements, admitted that during the week before social assistance benefits were paid their family often had one simple meal for the entire week. Many also said that they had to buy cheap food items to make it through the month. A woman explained:

We have to buy the cheapest food and prepare it so that the whole family will not feel hungry. I use fatty meat and potatoes to feed my family.

Very few residents in segregated settlements had access to land to grow food for their own consumption. Some pick mushrooms or berries from the forests. Non-Roma living in nearby villages reported that Roma steal potatoes and other food items from their fields.

HOUSING POLICIES. Most Roma in segregated settlements do not own their homes or land. In some settlements, property ownership is unclear. This prevents the improvement of housing conditions—since individuals and local governments are unable to maintain or invest in buildings or local infrastructure. Roma were more likely to have been left out of the property and land privatization processes that took place during the early 1990s than non-Roma. During the communist period, houses were mostly privately held, while the land belonged to the state. The “tenants” would rent their house or flat for 99 years from the state. After 1989, the government privatized land, or gave it to municipal governments. The land was given to the tenants for free if the house had a valid building permit, or appropriate legal status; and if the property was registered with the land-registry office and there were no pending applications for restitution. If these conditions were met, the tenant could apply for the transfer of property to his or her name.

Public communication regarding the process was limited, and many people were unaware of their options and the steps needed to initiate the transfer of land. In theory the mayor was responsible for informing residents of their rights. However, in practice, few mayors did so. None of the mayors in the settlements included in this study, with the exception of one mayor in Stará Ľubovňa, provided information to their constituents without being explicitly asked. Roma in integrated areas were more likely to learn about the process from their neighbors, while Roma in segregated areas had more limited access to information. As a result, a larger share of integrated Roma were able to secure property ownership. Those who do not own their land are limited in their ability to make needed improvements to their homes. A man from Kyjov, a segregated Roma settlement in Stará Ľubovňa, explained: "We built our house with a building permit, but there are still problems with the site, although it was officially given to us during socialism. But today the land is not ours, therefore we can not install any water, gas, or sewage pipes."

Roma in segregated areas face substantial challenges with legalizing their homes. The vast majority of houses in segregated settlements were built illegally, mostly on land with unclear ownership. In some of these settlements, such as the village of Jabloňové in Malacky, Roma moved into the area in the early 1990s and began to build houses on municipal land at the edge of the village. As a result, they lack legal access to electricity and water. In the case of electricity, they tap into homes of neighbors who have legal connections, and pay them directly.

Houses in settlements which are constructed with makeshift materials often do not comply with basic construction standards and were built without the required permits. Some Roma explained that the only way that they could afford to build shelter for themselves was to use materials that they found around their settlements, in forests or in garbage dumps. One explained, "we can never have legalized housing and obtain a permit, so why ask." This creates a vicious circle in which buildings do not have legal status, and as a result, municipalities cannot

provide funds for investment in infrastructure, such as roads, and public services.

Roma are also poorly positioned to borrow money, because of their economic status and lack of access to information on processes and procedures. Loan criteria have become more demanding since 1989, and the process for obtaining a building permit has become extremely complex. Current requirements include 32 individual permits and approvals from different government bodies. The research team encountered many unfinished homes that consisted of one or two rooms and a kitchen. Many of the occupants began building before 1989 and were unable to finish construction because they lacked financial resources or building permits. A Roma man in Stará Ľubovňa explained, "I started to build this house before 1989, but could not finish it because I have no chance to put together enough money and cannot get a loan."

HOUSING CONDITIONS. Housing conditions vary substantially between integrated and segregated areas. Conditions are the poorest in the most isolated and segregated settlements (Box 3.3). The homes of Roma living in more integrated areas, and those separated within a village, are similar. It is frequently not possible to identify the ethnicity of the owner from the outside of the house.

In segregated settlements, with the exception of Malacky, Roma houses are typically made of wood or scrap metal, plaster, tin, and tree branches. However, the construction type varies within regions depending on the kind of building materials available in the area. In the village of Kolačkov in Stará Ľubovňa, there was only one stone house, while the others were constructed from wood and clay. In the same district, in the village of Kyjov, houses and shacks are made of a mixture of stone and other materials, while in Šarišské Jastrabie stone houses are the norm. In Lomnička, a settlement of 1,200 people with only 100 houses, the majority (over 90 percent) of the houses were built from stones and bricks.

The extent of overcrowding within Roma houses is closely related to the degree of segregation and geographic isolation of the community. In general, in both Roma and non-Roma houses

Box 3.3: Housing Conditions in a Village in Stará Ľubovňa

Kolačkov is a segregated settlement of 220 inhabitants in the Stará Ľubovňa district. None of the houses in the settlement are legally registered. Unemployment is nearly 100 percent. In the village, a family of 7 people (the parents, their oldest daughter of 17, newly wed and pregnant, her husband, and three other children) lives in a two room shack constructed from wood and tin. The house lacks access to water and sewage and there is no garbage collection in the settlement. The family has a wood burning stove which is used for heating and cooking.

in integrated areas, the qualitative study found that there were approximately 1.5 people per room, while in segregated settlements there were an average of 3 to 4 persons per room. Estimates by district officials put the number of people per dwelling in Roma settlements at 9 in 1997.

ACCESS TO UTILITIES. Access to utilities and public services is nonexistent, or limited, in most marginalized settlements. The most serious problems include lack of access to electricity, water, sewage, and garbage collection. Integrated settlements, and separated settlements within a town or village, were more likely to be connected to services. In the better-off district of Malacky, all settlements, with one exception, had access to electricity and roads. In the other districts, more isolated settlements did not have access to utilities.

WATER. Many settlements lack access to running water. Five of the seven segregated settlements in the study, and four out of ten separated settlements, had no access to running water. In some areas, residents linked poor health conditions to the inadequacy of the water supply. Residents of Rimavská Píla in Rimavská Sobota complained that their drinking water was contaminated and caused diarrhea, parasites, and trachoma among children. In other areas, parents blamed epidemics of scabies and lice on the lack of running and hot water for washing.

ELECTRICITY. In some of the most isolated settlements, electricity was unavailable. In Stará Ľubovňa, two settlements lacked coverage and in four settlements households were receiving electricity through illegal connections. The situation was similar in Rimavská Sobota, where seven of the thirteen settlements either lacked electricity, or relied on illegal sources. Residents of Rimavská Sobota explained that the lack of electricity was particularly problematic in the winter, as it is difficult for them to afford candles or fuel.

WASTE COLLECTION. Lack of garbage collection also seriously affects living conditions and creates health problems. In the majority of segregated settlements, garbage collection was either nonexistent or sporadic because residents were unable to afford the service. Even in three segregated settlements in Malacky (Lozorno, Malé Leváre, and Plavecký Štvrtok), where nearly all homes had access to electricity, residents complained about the lack of garbage collection. They noted that garbage dumps were located near to their settlements, but there were not enough bins, and collection was irregular.

The situation was even worse in the poorer districts of Stará Ľubovňa and Rimavská Sobota. In most settlements in these districts, even if garbage collection facilities did exist, residents often complained that the municipalities only collected the garbage a couple of times a year (twice a year in Jakubany, or once in Ľubotín in Stará Ľubovňa). As a result, some residents throw their garbage into a nearby stream, or in the area around the containers.

Roma also complained that garbage dumps were too close to their settlements, leading to contamination of land and water, and in some cases, attracting rats, stray dogs and cats. Many local authorities blamed residents for not paying local fees for garbage collections. Mayors explained that some non-Roma communities purchased their own waste bins, while this was not the case in Roma settlements. Some mayors provided settlements with containers free of charge—but were unwilling to pay for waste removal, despite the fact that the charge for garbage collection was nominal.⁸

Lack of garbage collection perpetuates negative stereotypes about poor hygiene among Roma. Some non-Roma blame Roma for the situation of poor waste collection in settlements. An educated non-Roma commented:

Gypsies are themselves responsible for the terrible situation around their communities. I know of a situation where there is a garbage bin close to a building occupied by gypsies, but since it is 20 meters from the building and they are too lazy to walk there, they just throw their garbage out of their windows.

HEATING. Most Roma households rely on wood, the cheapest form of fuel, for heating. Gas was available to some households in integrated areas. In Stará Ľubovňa, gas was used by households in three integrated settlements. In one of the segregated settlements, only one household had access to gas. In Malacky, a few households in three settlements used gas, while the rest relied on wood. Roma generally expressed little interest in having gas pipes installed, because of the significantly higher costs. In the majority of houses in rural areas, wood burning fireplaces were used for both heating and cooking. Residents argued that they could not afford gas since it was extremely expensive to install a connection.⁹

SEWAGE. Only households in integrated areas have access to standardized plumbing. Most segregated and separated communities used septic tanks or nothing at all. A few households in each district have toilets, but the majority use latrines. In Stará Ľubovňa and Rimavská Sobota toilets were available in three settlements included in the studies. In Malacky, all settlements, with the exception of Plavecký Štvrtok had access to toilets.

HOUSEHOLD ASSETS. Ownership of cars was quite unusual. A few Roma in integrated and separated areas had cars. Only a limited number of households had telephones. In segregated settlements only a few residents owned cellular phones and cars; in many cases these were local moneylenders.

ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES AND COPING STRATEGIES

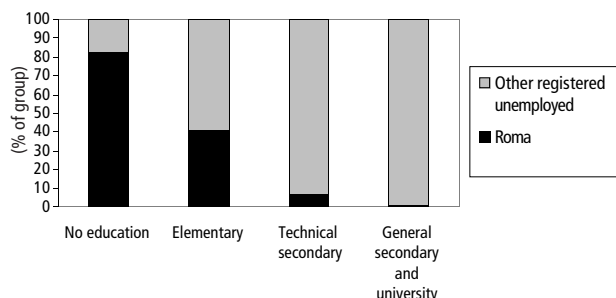
The emergence of unemployment has been one of the most serious social problems of economic transition in Slovakia.¹⁰ By 2000, unemployment had reached nearly 19 percent of the labor force—the highest rate in the OECD. Unemployment is closely linked with poverty. Households headed by an unemployed member are more than six times more likely to be poor than households headed by an employed individual.¹¹ Roma were more immediately affected by enterprise downsizing at the outset of transition than other groups, and now comprise a disproportionate share of the unemployed.

Education levels are closely related to labor market status in Slovakia. Unemployment rates for workers with basic education, or less, were close to 40 percent in 2000 (World Bank 2001b). Workers with vocational and apprenticeship education have higher unemployment rates than workers who have completed general secondary education. This reflects changes in labor market demand which have favored workers with more flexible academic backgrounds, rather than narrow technical training. As discussed further below, very few Roma complete secondary education, and those that do are more likely to have participated in vocational and apprenticeship schools, than academic secondary schools. The composition of registered unemployment by ethnicity reflects the education status of Roma (Figure 3.1).

Unemployment

The labor market status of Roma has changed dramatically during the transition period. Under socialism, many Roma held formal public sector jobs, most commonly in agricultural cooperatives, factories, public construction, and mines. Many of these enterprises have closed or have been substantially restructured over the last decade. A 1997 survey by the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Family, estimated that Roma comprised between 17 to 18 percent of the total unemployed in 1996, with this figure as high as 40 to 42 percent in eastern districts with large Roma populations (e.g. Košice, Spišská Nová Ves). Similarly, the registries from the National Labor Office (which contained

Figure 3.1: Registered Unemployment by Education and Ethnicity, 1999



Source: Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Family, Slovak Republic.

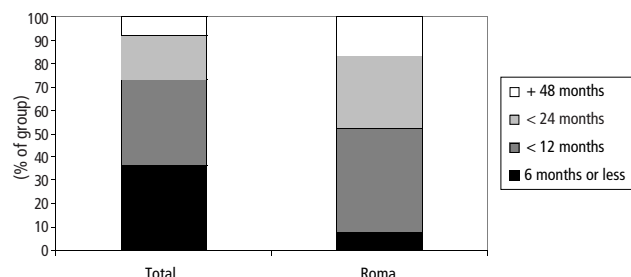
information on ethnicity until 1997) suggest that, for the country as a whole, Roma represented as much as one-quarter of all the registered unemployed in the Slovak Republic through 1999.¹² Furthermore, the share of Roma receiving unemployment benefits was lower than the share among the total population. This was mostly due to the long duration of unemployment for Roma.

The majority of unemployed Roma have been out of work for over one year. According to Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Family data for the first half of 1999, 92 percent of Roma registered as unemployed had been out of work for over one year, in comparison with 63 percent of the total population; 17 percent of Roma had been unemployed for over four years (Figure 3.2). Most of the Roma interviewed for the qualitative study had been out of work for over two years.

Even though unemployment is a problem faced by Roma across Slovakia, to a large degree its extent is linked to regional economic conditions. In Malacky, where the overall district unemployment rate was 13.5 percent in 1999, unemployment among Roma ranged from 60 percent in integrated settlements, to nearly 100 percent in the most segregated settlements. In Stará Ľubovňa and Rimavská Sobota, where total unemployment rates were higher, unemployment among Roma was between 80 and 100 percent.

Many Roma identified ongoing unemployment and insecurity as the most demoralizing

Figure 3.2: Unemployment by Duration, 1999
(% of total unemployed)



Source: Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Family, Slovak Republic.

aspects of their lives. A resident of Klenovec in Rimavská Sobota who had found employment explained: “we were happy that we found a meaningful way of spending a day. In two or three years a man gets used to doing nothing and then it gets really tough.” Another respondent noted, “when I had a job, it had a positive impact on the family because everybody felt more secure.” Roma also expressed discouragement with the lack of employment opportunities. Roma in segregated settlements are particularly disadvantaged, as job prospects are generally limited to seasonal employment in neighboring towns and villages. A 35-year-old father of five in a marginalized settlement in Stará Ľubovňa explained: “Who is going to give me a job? I have no education, no skills, and am Roma, even in my neighboring village nobody wants to give us any work.”

Unemployment among young people, and especially women, is high. Most young Roma interviewed from the settlements had never been formally employed. Young women generally do not enter the labor force, because of early pregnancies. Many get married and begin having children soon after completing primary school. Nearly all of the girls over 18 interviewed for this study, with the exception of those from more integrated villages in Malacky, or those in completely integrated areas in other districts, were already married with children, or pregnant. Women in more integrated areas were more likely to be

employed in traditionally female jobs as teachers, cleaning ladies, or public administrators.

Employment

The employment status of Roma included in the survey differed according to the degree of segregation. The majority of Roma from highly integrated settlements had finished secondary vocational education and had regular jobs, regardless of gender. In contrast, of Roma who were employed in the settlements, most were engaged in unskilled labor, frequently in seasonal agricultural work, or construction. In many settlements, public works are the only source of employment. A few Roma were employed in more skilled labor, including construction and stone masonry, some of them had vocational training. However, not all Roma with vocational education had jobs.

Labor Mobility and Migration

Labor mobility among Roma and non-Roma in Slovakia is low. Of those Roma in the study areas who were employed, most worked in the immediate surroundings of their settlements, because of transportation costs. Very few Roma sought employment in neighboring districts or countries, such as Hungary and the Czech Republic. Those that did commute to the Czech Republic complained that their wages were too low to make it worthwhile, that employers were often late in paying wages, or did not pay at all. Roma were more likely to work abroad if someone else in their family or settlement had gone first and had a successful experience. Roma from Malacky and Stará Ľubovňa were working in the Czech cities of Hradec Králové and Ostrava. However, Roma noted that commuting had been more common during the socialist period, “hardly anyone from our village goes to the Czech Republic these days, as it was in the past.”

Other Roma work in construction or seasonal agriculture in nearby towns or villages, where transport expenses are lower. Moving permanently—or for extended periods of time—to other districts or towns was not an option for most Roma. Roma from segregated communities are too poor to afford to move, and those from sepa-

rated communities are also discouraged from migration because of high costs and insecurity about finding work. It is more common for Roma families to move from towns and villages to settlements, rather than the other way around.

Discrimination

Many Roma cited ethnic discrimination as a significant barrier to employment, and as a rationale for not seeking work outside of their communities and villages. Although Slovakia has adopted antidiscrimination legislation, consistent with ILO conventions, Roma described experiences of discrimination. A number of Roma related anecdotes about friends or relatives who had applied for a job, and although they were accepted over the phone, were subsequently rejected as soon as the employer realized that they were Roma. While none of the Roma in the study had experienced this directly, it undoubtedly had an effect on their readiness to apply for jobs.

A school director explained that a Roma woman had applied for a teaching position in his school. He had a difficult time deciding whether to hire her, since he suspected that non-Roma parents might protest his decision. In the end she was not hired. A director of a vocational school in Podolíneč for cooks and waiters reported that he had difficulty finding restaurants which would accept his Roma students for practical training.

Roma also explained that they were denied employment because of low education levels: “Even trained people have no chance to find a job, so how could I find one?” Women noted this problem even more than men, “Men are allowed to take jobs for which they are not trained, but from a woman, they always require that she be trained.” Labor market discrimination was a source of stress for many Roma, and in many cases led people to give up their job search. A young Roma in Rimavská Sobota expressed a common sentiment: “No one will employ a Gypsy anyway, why try?”

Public Works Programs

Many Roma participate in public works programs run by the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs, and Family through local municipalities.

This program was initiated in 2000. Jobs generally last three months and most commonly involve unskilled work, such as cleaning streets and parks, and garbage collection. Jobs do not include training or preparation for future employment. A significant share of Roma, especially those in separated settlements in all of the three districts, participated in these projects. However, these programs may not always reach Roma. In two localities Roma explained that they were denied participation in the local public works program because the mayor preferred to hire a non-Roma applicant.

Some Roma respondents complained about the quality of work in the public works program and observed that, in some cases, work was focused almost exclusively on cleaning around non-Roma houses, and ignored Roma neighborhoods and settlements. On the other hand, many Roma interviewed explained that public works were a better alternative to unemployment: “When a man has a job, it is easier to live, he is healthier, he has more energy and life is more fun.”

Coping Strategies

INFORMAL SECTOR EMPLOYMENT. Due to limited formal employment opportunities, many Roma work in the informal sector. Because of the absence of taxes and official and unofficial fees, informal employment is frequently more attractive than formal jobs for both employers and employees. Common activities include salvaging and selling scrap metal, petty trade, and part-time work in agriculture and construction.

One of most widespread informal economic activities for Roma in the study settlements was working as musicians. This was particularly the case for Roma in Jesenské, Hodejov, and an urban ghetto in Rimavská Sobota. A few Roma had small workshops where they produce tools for construction workers, such as in Kaloša in Rimavská Sobota. Another common activity, mainly among those from segregated localities, was to salvage scrap material for resale. Other occasional and informal employment, especially for men, included helping non-Roma with minor

construction tasks. Some men painted houses and women worked as cleaning ladies.

Roma in geographically isolated and segregated areas have fewer opportunities for informal employment because their communities are closed off from broader society. Moreover, they have limited connections outside of the settlement to help them find work. A number of Roma admitted to resorting to theft as a coping strategy, including stealing potatoes, firewood, and construction materials.

ACCESS TO CREDIT. Roma lack opportunities to borrow money, and therefore have limited capacity to establish small businesses. Credit is scarce and costly for all small borrowers in the Slovak Republic but Roma may face additional hurdles. In many cases Roma lack collateral to borrow because of unclear property ownership. Access to loans from commercial institutions is virtually zero. Some Roma do borrow small sums from neighbors, friends, and relatives, as well as through local Roma usurers. In some communities the Roma leader, or *vajda*, lends money, however interest rates were reportedly extortionate—at 40 percent or higher, while the interest rate for consumer credit was around 14 percent.

SUBSISTENCE FARMING. Growing food was not reported to be an important coping strategy for the majority of Roma, including those who actually own land. Many Slovaks cultivate land, including small plots and gardens, to support their consumption. This practice was common during the socialist period, although never for Roma. Nearly all Roma households in integrated settlements, and some living on the margin of villages, own at least a small amount of land. Most household plots are small, ranging from 8–10 by 3–4 meter plots in back of their houses, or larger if not adjacent to the house. Some more affluent households did cultivate land. Crops vary according to region and include potatoes, wheat, grapes, and vegetables.

The majority of Roma in segregated settlements do not own land. In two settlements in Stará Ľubovňa, families owned their homes and land, and have been involved in agricultural

activities for three generations. In Studienka and Malé Leváre in Malacky, all of the households owned land, but only half grew crops. Roma explained that they did not make use of land for a number of reasons. In some cases the plot was too small to be viable, in other cases the soil was poor, there was no convenient source of water, or the household could not afford the necessary inputs. Others explained that cultivation of land was not traditionally a Roma occupation.

Very few families raised animals. Some families in the settlements, including those without land, kept chickens or pigs. However, raising livestock for household or commercial use was not reported. This was mainly due to the lack of land. Only five families included in the study cultivated land and raised animals. Some non-Roma explained that the breeding of animals for home use had declined during the transition period. Prior to 1989 it was common for agricultural cooperatives to give employees animals for domestic use, but now “[Roma] do not breed them since no one hands out small pigs for free anymore.”

ACCESS TO SOCIAL SERVICES

Roma in settlements are more likely to be geographically isolated and out of the range of coverage of health services and education—particularly preschool. Communication problems between non-Roma service providers and Roma also affect access and quality of services. Some Roma who are not fully proficient in the Slovak language are unable to communicate effectively with teachers, doctors, social workers, and other service providers. Social isolation and mistrust between Roma and non-Roma also influences relationships and access to services.

Education

According to the 1991 census, 77 percent of Roma had completed primary education, 8 percent had completed vocational training, and less than 2 percent had completed academic secondary or university education.¹³ An earlier survey from 1990 found that 56 percent of Roma men and 59 percent of Roma women had not completed primary education (Vašečka 2000a). Education

patterns of Roma in the settlements were consistent with this pattern. The majority of adults interviewed in the settlements had some primary education, although not all of them had completed all grades.

Almost all Roma from segregated, as well as some from separated areas, had not completed secondary school. In many cases, students dropped out after completing 10 years of compulsory education. Secondary education in Slovakia includes three main types of schools: gymnasias (or grammar schools); vocational schools; and specialized secondary schools. Gymnasias provide general academic training and prepare students to continue on to university. In 1998, 21 percent of Slovak secondary students were enrolled in gymnasias. None of the Roma interviewed for the study were enrolled in, or had attended, gymnasias.

Vocational schools include apprentice schools, which prepare students for specific occupations through two-year programs, secondary vocational schools, which offer two to three year programs, and secondary specialized schools, which prepare students for the labor market in specialized fields through professional programs. Most secondary school students are enrolled in vocational and apprentice schools, 46 percent in 1998, and 33 percent in secondary specialized schools. Graduates from secondary vocational schools are not eligible to enter higher education institutions unless they complete an additional two years of education and pass an examination, while graduates from secondary specialized schools may continue on to university. The majority of Roma who had continued on to secondary school were enrolled in apprentice schools or secondary vocational schools. Roma from integrated areas, and some better-off Roma from separated areas, were more likely to attend secondary specialized schools. Most of the respondents who had graduated from these schools had jobs.

Many Roma do not see a direct relationship between education and employment, partly because of widespread unemployment. The majority of Roma in separated and segregated communities have only primary or unfinished secondary education. In general, unskilled workers have found it increasingly difficult to partici-

pate in the labor market. This may reflect the lack of demand for labor with low skills; it may also be due to high payroll taxes and other non-wage costs which—given differences in productivity—make unskilled labor relatively costly compared to hiring workers with higher skills.

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE. Teachers and school directors in the study districts reported that the attendance of Roma children had been declining since 1989. Particularly in the poorest settlements, many children were observed playing in the streets during the school day. Some doctors reported that Roma children came to them to ask to be excused from school. Very few Roma children in the areas visited for the study continued beyond compulsory education.

Under socialism, penalties for truancy were more stringent and frequently enforced through mechanisms including interrogation by the police, placement of children in institutions, and reduction of social benefits. Some examples of these types of penalties were found in the study sites. In Rimavská Sobota, teachers reported absent students to the police and cut welfare benefits to motivate attendance. As a result, many parents understood education more as an obligation to the state than to their children. One parent explained: “They must go to school, this is the law. The teacher was here and told us, if we do not send our children to school, we will lose our financial support.”

Children from the most segregated and isolated settlements face the greatest challenges in accessing education. Some settlements are simply too small to be able to have their own school. In Malacky and Stará Ľubovňa, all separated settlements either had primary schools, or there was a school close by. In Rimavská Sobota, five settlements included in the sample had fewer than 500 inhabitants and no primary school, so children commuted to neighboring villages. Roma mothers from Kyjov, a settlement in Stará Ľubovňa, asked school officials not to let their children go on to the fifth grade because they were unable to pay for transportation to the school.

Poverty and a lack of basic infrastructure are also notable barriers to school attendance. The

absence of electricity in isolated settlements makes it difficult for children to study and do homework. Some Roma children need to stay home to help with housework and take care of siblings. As a result, they have difficulty keeping up with the curriculum. In the poorest areas, such as segregated settlements in Stará Ľubovňa and Rimavská Sobota, there were reports that children were unable to attend school because they lacked clothing and shoes.

PRESCHOOL ATTENDANCE. Few Roma children from segregated settlements attend preschools. Preschool in Slovakia is not compulsory and generally includes children between three and six years of age. Most segregated settlements lack preschool facilities. An exception was the settlement in Plavecký Štvrtok in Malacky, where the church had opened a preschool mainly for the children of the settlement. Many parents interviewed did not recognize the value of preschool, and felt that mothers could adequately prepare their children. A Roma mother explained, “all of my children are at home, together with me, I am at home, so why send them to kindergarten?” Parents also cited costs related to attending kindergarten such as fees and clothing as a deterrent. “Kindergarten is not free of charge, we would need to pay and we cannot afford that.”¹⁴

Because Roma children begin primary school unprepared, they face additional difficulties in adapting to the school environment. These circumstances exacerbate preconceptions of non-Roma students and teachers that Roma are not capable of learning, and lead to further exclusion. In many cases, Roma are placed in separate classes or special schools because of their lack of preparation.

LANGUAGE. Roma in Slovakia also differ linguistically. Over half of Roma in Slovakia are thought to speak some of the Roma language, but it is not known how many speak it at home. Roma from isolated and segregated settlements may be introduced to the Slovak language only once they enter primary school.

Teachers are poorly equipped to handle this gap in the children’s knowledge, and in some cases send Roma children to separate classrooms

or special schools if they cannot keep up with the rest of the students. School directors explained:

Children from segregated [Roma] settlements do not master the Slovak language and do not understand their teachers. The teachers do not speak the Roma language, so they communicate by using gestures.

In a school where teachers do not speak the Roma language at all, or only some, the first grade is not enough for these children to eliminate the gap [with other children].

It is easier to remove the language barrier in mixed classes, but many Roma kids are in separate classes.

The issue is even more complex in ethnically diverse areas, such as Slovak-Hungarian areas in the south. In Rimavská Sobota, some children speak Hungarian in addition to the Roma language, but are not proficient in Slovak. Others are neither fully proficient in Slovak nor Hungarian, yet attend Hungarian schools. The situation is similar in some villages in Stará Ľubovňa, where most non-Roma speak Ruthenian.

DEMAND FOR EDUCATION. Low demand for education among some Roma families discourages children from attending school. This has its roots in chronic unemployment, which is common in many Roma settlements due to the lack of job opportunities. The dismal labor market situation leads parents to undervalue the importance of education. A Roma parent noted, "my daughter completed secondary school, now she is sitting at home without work." Another asked, "why force our children to study when there aren't jobs for the educated ones?"

In some cases, parents, especially those from integrated and separated localities where employment opportunities are greater, acknowledged the importance of education for their children's future. A grandparent in Malacky explained, "My grandson is a first grade student. We sent him to kindergarten and hope in the

future he will put more importance on education than we did." A resident of Rimavská Sobota concurred, "I think that Roma should change. For example we need to make sure that our children go to better schools, because their future depends on that."

A significant share of Roma view education as a system representative of gadje society, which is of limited relevance for them. Parents explained: "From the beginning, since the first grade, our children have difficulties understanding what is going on: other children are singing the songs we do not know." And, "all poetry, literature, history is not about and from our life."

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT. As demand for education among Roma in isolated and segregated communities is low, Roma parents are less likely to be involved in their children's education. Many Roma students lack effective role models. Roma parents are frequently poorly positioned to help their children with school work at home because of their own limited educational backgrounds. In more integrated areas some parents were involved in schools. A parent in Malacky noted the importance of being involved: "I help my children learn every day, if I miss out on one day of reading with my son, the very next day he has a problem. Therefore I help them study every day." However, most Roma students lack the advantages of other students whose parents assist their children with school work, and/or hire private tutors.

SPECIAL SCHOOLS AND CLASSES. As discussed in Chapter Two, Roma are at a higher risk of receiving lower quality education because of institutional factors and incentives which lead to separate education for Roma and non-Roma. Special schools are a legacy from the socialist era, and were designed to provide special education for children with mental and physical disabilities. A disproportionate share of Roma are enrolled in special schools. A majority of Roma students from the segregated settlements in the qualitative study attend special schools.¹⁵ Students enrolled in special schools are at a dual disadvantage, first because the curriculum is less rigorous and

expectations of teachers are lower than in mainstream schools, and second, because opportunities for graduates of special schools are limited.

Even when Roma children are educated within the mainstream Slovak school system, they may be placed in separate Roma classes. The majority of primary schools in segregated and separated settlements have separate classes for Roma students. Maximum class sizes are low, and provide teachers with a rationale for separating Roma children.¹⁶ According to teachers, non-Roma parents favor this separation by arguing that Roma students slow down the educational process. These dynamics create an environment that can be hostile. A Roma mother in a village in Stará Ľubovňa observed that “children are not racist, it is their parents that tell them to keep separate, and that is why they tease our kids and call them names.”

Some Slovak teachers argued that Roma should attend special schools and classes because they need special care and assistance which cannot be provided in a regular classroom. Others took an opposite view. A third grade teacher at a primary school in Šarišské Jastrabie; in Stará Ľubovňa explained: “It is simplistic to consider these children mentally disturbed—and there should be even more reasons to step up the effort. If you can do it, they catch on.”

Despite the disadvantages of special schools and classes, some interviewed parents believed that their children receive more attention at special schools and are not singled out. A Roma mother said: “The youngest son does not go to a kindergarten, since I am at home. My son and daughter go to a special school. At the beginning my son went to a normal primary school, but he was not good in reading, so the teacher suggested he go to a special one. We are satisfied with him, he gets only A’s. We put our daughter into a special school ourselves.” Most Roma parents expressed a preference for mixed classes, so that their children would be exposed to the Slovak language.

The director of a special school noted, “approximately 30–40 percent of children attend special primary schools on the basis of their parents decision. Sometimes, the parents do not

want to put their first child here, but as they have more children they find out that here the children achieve better results than in a ‘normal’ primary school.” Roma parents also indicated that they preferred special schools because there are more Roma children and their children are “protected” from discrimination and hostility from non-Roma students. In some cases, special schools provide housing, making them more financially attractive to parents.

TEACHERS. Teachers are central to the quality of education and play an important role in motivating student attendance and performance. In many settlements, teachers were poorly prepared to work with Roma children. Many teachers interviewed expressed an interest in training and teaching materials in Roma culture and history, as very few of them had any knowledge of Roma issues. Prejudices and low expectations of Roma students by teachers can adversely affect student performance. This phenomenon manifests itself in different ways. Some parents complained that teachers did not let their students bring textbooks home because they believed Roma children would destroy them. As a result, students lacked the opportunity to do homework and adequately prepare for classes.¹⁷

The study also found a number of examples in which teachers and school directors took the initiative to reach out to Roma communities and support Roma children at school, but these examples were sporadic and stemmed from individual initiative. Educational advisors also played an important positive role in some schools. In Šarišské Jastrabie, advisors worked with Roma parents to encourage them to send their children to school and continue on to secondary education. In some communities, such as Jarovnice, Teplý Vrch and Jabloňové in Malacky and Rimavská Sobota, teachers and school officials maintain close relations with Roma parents and children. They make frequent visits to Roma settlements and work to mitigate conflicts between children.

Some teachers visit Roma settlements on their own initiative to persuade parents to send their children to school. Because Roma from segregat-

ed and some from separated settlements often do not have officially registered residences, local and school officials would not know about some Roma children without the assistance of teachers. A teacher explained the challenge of convincing parents to send their children to school: "One boy told me that his father did not want to enroll him in a secondary school. So I invited his father to school and tried to convince him that it was a good idea. I think now [the boy's] chances are about fifty-fifty."

In areas where teachers and school directors were more available and involved in their communities, Roma parents expressed satisfaction with the schools, and children were happy to attend school. Roma mothers explained:

The teacher visits our settlements on a regular basis. She has bought some books for my children and also organized afternoon activities for them.

We go to school meetings, but that is not the only meeting with the teacher. He comes here, to the settlement, and borrows tapes with Romany music. Children then learn Romany songs with the teacher.

The interviews indicate that such initiatives have increased communication and understanding between Roma parents and schools in these communities.

Social Assistance

Social assistance benefits provide an important source of income for many Roma households. Nearly all of the long-term unemployed Roma interviewed for this study, and especially those living in poorer segregated settlements, are dependent upon social assistance benefits for income support. Many noted that these benefits were indispensable, but felt that they were not adequate to secure basic living conditions. For many outsiders, the dependency of Roma on benefits reinforced stereotypes of Roma as social parasites who would rather receive income support than work.

Reintegration of unemployed Roma workers into the labor force may be made more difficult

by the distorted incentives arising from the design of the social safety net. Social assistance in Slovakia lacks mechanisms for benefits to taper off gradually as workers become employed, thus building pro-work incentives. Consequently, the system penalizes those who find employment and sets up a dependency trap. The relationship between the design of the safety net and these distorted work incentives is not in any sense unique to Roma families, but the demographic characteristics of the Roma, with relatively low levels of educational attainment, and a large number of children, makes them particularly vulnerable to falling into this dependency trap.

Many Roma complained that the reforms to the Act on Social Assistance, which cut benefits for those who had been unemployed for two years or more, made it impossible for them to survive on social assistance. Although this change was intended to promote work incentives, Roma in isolated settlements were particularly disadvantaged because of the absence of job opportunities. Non-Roma social workers and local government officials also felt that the current system of child allowances and the subsistence minimum provided incentives for Roma to have large families. While there is no empirical evidence to confirm this, the importance of these benefits for the survival of many poor Roma families contributes to the impression among non-Roma that Roma are overly dependent on the state.

Relations between social workers and Roma were reportedly more contentious than relations with other public service providers. Roma view social workers as representatives of the state, and they are frequently the only contact Roma have with government authorities. Social workers are responsible for conveying "bad news" on eligibility for benefits, and as a result, are often the target of frustration with decisions that are not necessarily under their control.

Social workers are poorly prepared to work with Roma communities. This lack of preparation is linked to systemic problems within the welfare system itself. Social workers in Slovakia rarely do field visits and are not trained to work directly with clients. Instead, their jobs are largely administrative, focused on disbursing cash benefits.

Social workers explained that they had no time left for field visits and complained about the administrative burden of their work: “Every time the law is amended, we have to check and review all files. We often work late in the evening and do not have time for fieldwork.” Only two of the social workers interviewed for the study actually visited Roma settlements. The lack of contact between Roma and social workers contributes to poor communication on both sides.

Many Roma complained that social workers were not responsive to their needs. Some social workers were not effective at communicating with Roma, as many Roma lacked basic information on social assistance programs and eligibility criteria. Some Roma asked the interviewers for information on various benefits. In other cases, Roma appeared well versed in the eligibility criteria of benefits.

ADDRESSING POVERTY IN SETTLEMENTS

An important finding of the field work in Slovakia is that the degree of segregation and marginalization of a Roma settlement is correlated with the level of poverty in the settlement. While these linkages need to be validated through further research, the basic findings are clear. Roma living in more remote and segregated settlements have fewer opportunities to participate in the mainstream economy, access social services, and tap into social networks and information about jobs. In other words, geographic and social exclusion are important correlates of poverty. In contrast, Roma in integrated areas are more likely to interact with non-Roma and are better informed and positioned to identify and take advantage of opportunities.

These results have important policy implications. In the first place, they highlight the diverse nature of Roma in Slovakia and the need for varied approaches to different circumstances. Second, they indicate that interventions which reduce isolation and exclusion of Roma through integration can facilitate the improvement of living conditions over the longer term. This does not imply that programs and policies should revert to the type of forced assimilation which was prevalent under the socialist period. Rather, policy and project design

need to be sensitive to Roma culture and the desire of communities to maintain their cultural identity.

This objective can be ensured through participation of Roma. A number of successful projects use Roma mentors as liaisons between Roma and non-Roma communities. For example, Roma assistant teachers who work with parents, or peer advisors who assist with job placement can facilitate integration, while strengthening the Roma community itself.

Addressing exclusion and the negative impacts of segregation also involves overcoming divisions between Roma and non-Roma communities. Measures in this regard need to involve Roma and non-Roma alike. Education is an important vehicle for overcoming cultural barriers by including the history and culture of Roma and other minorities in the curriculum. Training of teachers, local government officials and other personnel working in social services can be important mechanisms for addressing discrimination within public services. Finally public information campaigns can promote multiculturalism and raise awareness about discrimination. Addressing Roma poverty in Slovakia is a complex challenge, which will take time and greater understanding of the opportunities and challenges ahead.

NOTES

1. This chapter is based on a study by the World Bank, Foundation SPACE, INEKO and the Open Society Institute, *Poverty and Welfare of Roma in the Slovak Republic*. Bratislava, 2002. The work was led by Iveta Radicova, Helen Shahriari, and Dena Ringold.

2. For a more detailed discussion of the history of Roma in Slovakia see Crowe (1994).

3. Estimates differ, however approximately 6,000–8,000 Czech Roma are thought to have been killed.

4. Roma were officially allowed to form organizations during the first Czechoslovak Republic (1918–38), but none did. The first Roma organization was established in 1948 and was banned soon after by the communists.

5. This figure is based on a loose definition of settlements, including integrated areas in towns

and villages. It is unclear to what extent the higher number of settlements in 1998 reflects an actual increase, or whether it is due to changes in the way in which settlements were counted.

6. The database, housed in the Office of the Plenipotentiary for Roma Communities, provides only a rough estimate of the number of settlements and their conditions. The fieldwork conducted for this study found significant errors in the database regarding the number and location of settlements.

7. "Gadje" is a Roma word for non-Roma.

8. The amount differs from one municipality to another, depending on the wealth of the municipality. For instance, in a better-off neighborhood close to Bratislava the annual collection fee is 1000 Slovak crowns (about US\$21). In other areas it is much less.

9. According to residents of one village it can cost up to 47,000 Slovak crowns for a gas connection (close to US\$1000).

10. For an in-depth discussion of the Slovak labor market, refer to World Bank 2001b.

11. Based on 1996 Microcensus data (World Bank, 2001b).

12. The practice of collecting information based on ethnicity was discontinued in 1998 after protest from Roma and Hungarians. One reason for these criticisms was that ethnicity was being

judged by labor office staff, which was inconsistent with Slovak legislation aimed at protecting basic individual rights.

13. Primary education in Slovakia includes grades 1–9 and generally covers children from 6 to 16 years old.

14. Fees are set regionally and vary based upon the economic situation of the region. For example, in 2000 fees ranged from 600 Slovak crowns in Bratislava (approximately US\$13), to 20 crowns per month in Rimavská Sobota (approximately US\$0.50).

15. There are approximately 380 special schools throughout the Slovak Republic for mentally and physically disabled children. A total of 30,583 students study in special schools, which amounts to about 3 percent of the total number of students at kindergartens, primary schools and secondary schools altogether.

16. The minimum class size is 4. The maximum number of students is 8 for grade 1; 10 for grades 2–5; and 12 for grades 6–9.

17. In Slovakia, textbooks are free of charge. Children keep their books at home. However in some—especially segregated—settlements, teachers keep the books in the classroom, explaining that children do not have a place to keep the books at home and as a result they are damaged throughout the course of the year.

Chapter Four: THE DIVERSITY OF ROMA IN ROMANIA

Romania has the largest Roma population in Central and Eastern Europe, and also one of the most diverse.¹ This variety reflects historical, religious, linguistic, and occupational characteristics, which are often overlapping. Roma communities also vary in terms of regional settlement patterns, levels of integration, and economic and social development. However, Roma in Romania face common issues, related to access to education, health care, social assistance, and housing, that underpin widespread poverty. This chapter looks at these common challenges, drawing from case studies which provide a more detailed understanding of the interlocking mechanisms of Roma poverty.

Poverty in Romania, and that of Roma in particular, is related to interconnected factors, including inherited policies from past regimes, the fiscal constraints associated with the transition process, policy design, and aspects of exclusion within society. Romania faces these issues within an international environment concerned with human rights and minority protection, particularly in the context of Romania's candidacy for EU accession. This chapter examines the situation of Roma in Romania at the nexus of these converging factors. It begins with a discussion of the historical setting. The second section explores the diversity of nine Roma communities analyzed as case studies. The third section examines access to social services for Roma and the final section discusses social and ethnic relations between Roma and others in Romania.

FROM SLAVERY TO CEAUCESCU

The history of Roma in Romania is particularly dark and difficult, characterized by enslavement until 1856, repression and extermination during the Holocaust, and forced assimilation

under the socialist Ceaucescu regime. The legacies of these different regimes have had important implications for the overall status of Roma in the country. While the socialist period brought some improvements to Roma in social and economic terms (see Chapter One for a general discussion), the assimilationist policies of this era were accompanied by considerable political repression and created a gulf of mistrust between Roma and the state which continues to this day.

By most accounts, Roma first arrived in Romania's historical provinces of Wallachia and Moldavia toward the end of the eleventh century (Crowe 1991). Initially free to pursue their crafts and trades, by the fifteenth century Roma slavery was institutionalized in the Romanian provinces, lasting well into the nineteenth century (Panaitescu 1941; Gheorghe 1983; Beck 1989; Crowe 1991 1994). Romanian rulers brought large numbers of Roma slaves back from various military campaigns.² At the turn of the sixteenth century, the Romanian provinces fell under the Ottoman Empire. During this period, the condition of both slaves and the Romanian peasantry deteriorated further. Because Roma had unique skills as artisans, craftsmen, and metallurgists, laws were enacted to ensure that they would remain slaves.³ Slaves were generally treated poorly, and cases of torture and death were not uncommon (CED-IME-SE 2001).

Throughout Europe, the Enlightenment period of the nineteenth century brought about a change in attitude toward Roma and minorities in general. By the middle of the century, a number of prominent owners freed their slaves. Slavery was finally abolished in the 1850s and 1860s. However, the situation of Roma did not improve appreciably after the abolition of slavery, and

many fled. This exodus was initially stimulated by fears of re-enslavement, and subsequently continued due to deteriorating socioeconomic conditions (Crowe 1994). Of those Roma who stayed, few were given land, and those who did receive land often lacked the skills to cultivate it effectively. During these times, Roma were engaged in occupations ranging from metalworking and carpeting to bottle-collecting and begging (Zamfir and Zamfir 1993b). Others, unable to find any other means of survival, offered themselves for resale to their old masters (Hancock 1997).

The redrawing of boundaries following World War I brought a large new, mostly Hungarian, minority population to Romania. The share of minorities in Romania's total population increased from 8 percent to nearly 30 percent after the war, significantly altering the ethnic composition of the state (Livezeanu 1995). Of this number, less than 1 percent were estimated to be Roma (Crowe 1991). Although agreements signed by Romania following the war included measures for the protection of minority rights, these were not implemented, largely because of the assimilation policies of the new government. The Depression of 1929 were followed by an increasingly nationalist and oppressive period, accompanied by increased prejudice against Roma.

As elsewhere in Europe, conditions for Roma in Romania deteriorated significantly with the rise of fascism and the onset of World War II. Between 1941 and 1942, under the fascist Antonescu regime, an estimated 25,000 to 36,000 Roma were expelled and transported to camps in Transdneister. At least half died of cold, starvation, and disease (Crowe 1991).⁴ From 1944 to 1947, under the increasing influence of the Soviet Union, many minorities were promised improved rights as a part of Stalin's efforts to use "the national minorities as a means for undermining anticommunism in Romania" (Crowe 1991). Initially, many Roma and members of other minorities joined the Romanian Communist Party.

Policies toward Roma during the socialist era were largely assimilationist, many Roma farmers and nomadic Roma were forced into employment in agricultural collectives and heavy industry. These efforts continued through the 1970s. Tradi-

tional Roma occupations were declared illegal (Gilberg 1974; Beck 1985); many Roma were relocated;⁵ and cultural expression was suppressed through bans on folk music and the use of the Roma language (CEDIME-SE 2001). Roma were also often subject to persecution by police and local officials (Zang and Levy 1991). While policies aimed at settling Roma by providing them with housing, education, and jobs did lead to overall improvements in their living standards, deteriorating economic conditions during the final years of the communist regime led to the emergence of widespread unemployment and poverty. On the margins of a rapidly changing society, some Roma began to turn to illegal means for survival, perpetuating societal stereotypes and hostility (Zamfir and Zamfir 1993b).

The Transition Period and Beyond

For Romania's minorities, the overthrow of the Ceausescu regime in 1989 brought the potential for new economic and political opportunities. Over the past decade, however, very few Roma have been able to take advantage of them. The particularly acute economic decline in Romania led to rapidly falling living standards for the entire population. Roma have been disproportionately affected by trends of rising unemployment, growing poverty, shrinking social assistance, as well as limited access to housing, education, and health care. As discussed in Chapter Two, the share of Roma who are poor is more than twice as high as that of non-Roma.⁶ The deterioration of Roma living conditions has been exacerbated by entrenched patterns of discrimination, prejudice, and incidences of ethnic violence (Cartner 1994; ERRC 1996; OSI 2001).⁷

The situation of Roma in Romania has attracted particular attention in part because they constitute the largest absolute population Europe. According to the 1992 census, less than one-half a million Roma live in Romania. Unofficial estimates are much higher. For example, Zamfir and Zamfir estimated that in 1993 the Roma population was just over 1 million (or 4.6 percent of the total population), a figure subsequently revised to 1.5 million in 1999 (Bárány 2002).

DIVERSITY OF ROMA SETTLEMENTS

A qualitative study of nine case studies of contrasting communities was undertaken to document the diversity of Roma social and economic conditions in Romania (Box 4.1). The sites were selected for their diversity along a number of dimensions, including urban and rural locations, ethnic and religious composition, income sources, and economic opportunities, socioeconomic status, and levels of political participation (Table 4.1). The sites are located in six different counties, or *judets*, in Romania: Bucharest, Tulcea, Vaslui, Covasna, Hunedoara, and Timis. Field research in these communities was undertaken in 1999.

As highlighted in the discussion of Slovakia in the previous chapter, the physical locations of the Roma communities in rural and urban areas reflect different degrees of geographic exclusion, which in turn are related to other types of exclusion within society. Urban localities in the study include the Zabrauti neighborhood in the capital city of Bucharest and a Roma community in Timisoara, one of the largest cities in Romania. The Roma communities of Babadag and the Örko quarter of Saint Gheorghe (Sf. Gheorghe), are located in smaller, provincial towns, while the Iscroni quarter in the small town of Aninoasa is located in the industrialized Jiu Valley, a mining

area in southwestern Romania which was hard hit by restructuring in the 1990s. Valcele, Ciopeia, Iana, and Nadrag are all located in rural areas.

Rural Roma communities frequently lack basic infrastructure and utilities such as paved roads, running water, electricity, and telephone lines. In urban areas, communities are frequently ghetto-like, located in distinct neighborhoods, and situated on the periphery of cities or towns. In Sf. Gheorghe, Roma live in small houses scattered on hillsides on the outskirts of towns. Other Roma in the area live in two dilapidated blocks of flats which are separated from the other houses by a concrete wall, nicknamed the “Berlin Wall”.

Each of these communities reflects different combinations of Roma subgroups. Some localities are quite heterogeneous, such as the Zabrauti community in Bucharest, which contains multiple ethnic groups. These groups range from quite traditional, speaking primarily the Roma language (Sporitori), to more integrated, speaking primarily, or only, Romanian. The Babadag community has three main Roma groups, the largest of which are Muslim Roma. In Iana, the majority of Roma actively participate in the Orthodox church. Nadrag and Sf. Gheorghe are more homogeneous communities which consist primarily of Hungarian-speaking Roma. The Ciopeia

Box 4.1: The Qualitative Study of Roma Communities in Romania

In 1999, qualitative fieldwork was carried out in nine different sites across Romania to get a more complete picture of living conditions and access to social services. The sites are located in six different districts in Romania: Zabrauti (a neighborhood within Bucharest), Babadag, Iana, Sf. Gheorghe, Valcele, Ciopeia (a village within the Santamaria Orela commune), Iscroni (a quarter of Aninoasa), Timisoara, and Nadrag. Table 4.1 provides the summary.

In an attempt to reflect the diversity in Roma settlements in Romania, the selection of the case study communities was based on considerations including geographic diversity; historical factors; variety of Roma subgroups; income sources and living standards; the degree of integration of Roma in their respective communities; family and social structures; and degrees of political participation and access to information channels in their respective communities.

Information for the study was gathered from over 65 in-depth interviews between June and November 1999. Key informants included: educational personnel, such as teachers, administrators and staff; medical staff, including doctors, nurses and hospital administrators; local government authorities; representatives of NGOs; and religious officials. Over 165 interviews were also conducted with individuals (155) and groups (10) of Roma in these localities.

Table 4.1: Main Features of the Case Study Sites, 1999

Case Study Community	County/Judet	Rural/Urban	Type of Roma Subgroups	Origins of the Community
Zabrauti	Bucharest	Urban	Mixed (including Spoitori, Ursari, Turkish Roma, and Vatrasi)	Squatters occupied seven abandoned apartment buildings after 1989. The majority are Roma.
Babadag	Tulcea	Urban	Muslim (Turkish) Roma	In the 1950s, Roma families were settled in Babadag as part of the housing policies of the socialist government.
Sf. Gheorghe (Örko quarter)	Covasna	Urban	Hungarian-speaking Roma	Roma settled in Örko after World War II.
Timisoara	Timis	Urban	Mixed community of Rudari and Caldarari Roma	Roma settled in this neighborhood in the 1950s, from neighboring villages, but also from more distant regions.
Aninoasa (Iscroni quarter)	Hunedoara	Urban	Lingurari and Rudari Roma	Most Roma migrated to the Jiu Valley during the socialist era, where they were employed in the mining industry.
Iana	Vaslui	Rural	Lingurari and Rudari Roma	Roma first came to Iana as freed slaves following the 1864 rural reforms, and later as veterans of World War I.
Valcele (Araci, Ariusd, Hetea and Valcele)	Covasna	Rural	Lingurari and Rudari Roma	Unknown origins.
Ciopeia	Hunedoara	Rural	Caldarari Roma, relatively wealthy	Unknown origins.
Nadrag	Timis	Rural	Small community of Hungarian-speaking Roma	Roma arrived in Nadrag in the late 1970s, from the northern town of Satu-Mare, following a powerful earthquake.

village in Hunedoara is populated primarily by relatively well-off Caldarari Roma.

The communities vary significantly in their origins and histories. The most recent, Zabrauti, emerged after 1989 when Roma occupied deserted apartment buildings in Bucharest as squatters, due to housing shortages and deteriorating economic conditions. In contrast, the Roma village in

Iana has existed in Vaslui since 1864, when Roma slaves were freed and granted land under rural land reforms. Roma in Babadag arrived at the end of World War II, while Roma settled in Nadrag and Iscroni, in the Jiu Valley, during the socialist period, when low-skilled labor was in demand for the mining industry.

The nine communities differ substantially in size, and there is considerable disagreement between the official and unofficial population figures. According to official data, there are no Roma in Iana. However, estimates made by local authorities and service providers in 1999 suggest that between 1,200 and 1,500 Roma live in the commune. Similarly, 1992 census data for Babadag report that Roma account for nearly 10 percent of the population, while unofficial estimates put the figure closer to 16 percent. Local officials in Valcele believe that Roma make up nearly 60 percent of the population, while the 1992 data indicate only 9 percent. According to local sources, Sf. Gheorghe has the largest Roma community, between 2,500 and 5,000 Roma, while Nadrag has the smallest at 70 people (Table 4.2).

INCOME SOURCES AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES

Prior to the socialist period, many Roma worked in traditional trades. During the socialist period, and particularly under the Ceausescu regime, many Roma were forced to abandon

these trades for work in state-run agricultural cooperatives, forestry, and industries such as construction, manufacturing, and food processing. Although the production and trade of traditional goods was considered illegal economic activity under the socialist regime, some Roma continued to work in these trades, either full- or part-time, in order to supplement their income from official employment in this way.

While income sources in the Roma communities vary widely, there are some common features. In a 1993 study, Zamfir and Zamfir found that income derived from formal wage employment constitutes a significantly lower proportion of average income for Roma than for the majority population. Roma still employed in traditional trades tended to have income levels which were higher than the national average.⁸ A substantial percentage of Roma income derived from a combination of part-time, casual, and self-employed work, much of which was conducted in the informal economy and at times on the margins of legality. High levels of Roma unemployment in the formal sector reflected low qualifications for

Table 4.2: Roma Populations in Case Study Communities

Case Study Community	Total Population	Roma Population (1992 Census)		Roma Population (1999 Unofficial Estimates)	
		Number of Roma	Percentage of Total Population	Number of Roma	Percentage of Total Population
Zabrauti	—	1,000	—	800	—
Babadag	10,435	969	9.3%	1,700	16.3%
Iana	3,850	0	0%	1,200–1,500	30–40%
Sf. Gheorghe (Örko quarter)	68,359	886	1.3%	2,500–5,000	3.6–7.3%
Valcele (villages of Araci, Ariusd, Hetea and Valcele)	3,500	300	8.6%	2,018	57.7 %
Ciopeia	4,000	289	7.3%	290	7.25 %
Aninoasa (Iscroni quarter)	5,985	29	0.5%	500	8.4%
Timisoara	334,115	2,668	0.8%	—	—
Nadrag	3,250	0	0%	65–70	2.1%

— Not available.

Sources: National Commission of Statistics for the Census; estimates of local officials and service providers.

jobs. The 1993 study found that 60 percent of employed Roma were unskilled, and only 2 percent reported having middle or higher-level qualifications. Exclusion and discrimination also limit labor market opportunities. Roma report that they are generally the last hired and first hired. More recent survey findings suggest relatively low Roma unemployment rates in Romania (24 percent) compared to those in Bulgaria, Hungary, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia (UNDP 2003). According to this same survey, these lower rates are due in large part to high levels of Romanian Roma participation in the informal sector. Around 16 percent of Roma are estimated to be reliant predominantly on state support for their survival.

The situation of Roma in the village of Ciopeia illustrates employment patterns—shifting from traditional trades to formal sector employment during the socialist period, and subsequently to informal employment during the 1990s. Ciopeia is located in Hunedoara judet, a former center of heavy industry and mining. Ciopean Roma are largely Caldarari, a traditional subgroup which speaks the Romani language. Relative to other Roma and Romanian communities in the municipality, Roma in Ciopeia have been well off. Prior to the socialist regime, Ciopean Roma were engaged in traditional occupations including manufacturing bricks and buckets and selling hand-made soap. During the Ceausescu regime, many became employed in a large metallurgical factory in the area, or at the local butcher's shop. Although it was illegal, some workers continued their traditional roles, and others began trading merchandise with nearby Serbia.

Following the revolution in 1989, many Ciopean Roma were laid off when restructuring began at the factory. Since then, involvement in trade, employment abroad, and other informal sector activities have intensified. Many Ciopeans sell and barter secondhand clothing at flea markets in Hateg and Petrosani (towns 40 kilometers away), and with neighboring villages. Still others have emigrated, or have taken on short-term work in Western Europe, most commonly in Germany.

Although Roma living conditions and economic opportunities depend substantially on regional economic conditions, with few exceptions, nearly all Roma in the study sites were poor and worse off than non-Roma in the area.⁹ Bucharest and Timisoara are among the most prosperous counties in Romania. Sf. Gheorghe is also a relatively prosperous town. Babadag, on the other hand, has been severely affected by the collapse of heavy industry, as has the Jiu Valley, where Hunedoara is located. Consequently, unemployment is high among the Roma communities in Hunedoara, including Ciopeia and Iscroni. The economy of rural Nadrag depended in large part on a local mechanical factory. After successive waves of layoffs, the factory closed in 1998, causing Nadrag's economy to collapse. Valcele, Iana, and Ciopeia are largely agricultural economies. With the exception of Iana, Roma generally do not own land and depend either on day-labor or other non-agricultural occupations such as small trades or work abroad.

For the communities in the more prosperous counties, such as Zabrauti, Babadag, Sf. Gheorghe, and Timisoara, the income levels of Roma vary from moderate to extremely low (Table 4.3). In other communities, such as Valcele and Nadrag, the interviewers identified nearly all of the families as extremely poor. Overall, urban communities have higher and more mixed income levels, while rural communities, with the exception of Ciopeia, range from low to extremely low. In Ciopeia incomes were higher, and Roma living standards were found to be largely equivalent to non-Roma.

In the study sites, Roma employment was categorized into four main types of occupations: work abroad, day labor, trade, and subsistence occupations. Few Roma in the communities are employed in the formal economy, either as salaried workers, or as owners of small businesses or farms. Rather, the most lucrative and steady sources of income come from trade and work abroad, including day labor such as selling newspapers. Trade in secondhand clothing, itinerant trade in villages, and agricultural day labor, also help prevent families from living in extreme poverty.

Table 4.3: Income Sources and Economic Stratification, 1999

Case Study Community	Rural/ Urban	Income Levels	Primary Income Sources		
			Moderate-Income	Low-Income	Extremely Low-Income
Zabrauti	Urban	Mixed	Employment ¹	Day laborers ³ Small trade ⁴	Day laborers Waste recycling Begging
Babadag	Urban	Mixed	Itinerant trade in villages	Itinerant trade in villages	Day laborers
Sf. Gheorghe (Örko quarter)	Urban	Mixed	Work abroad (Hungary) ²	Work abroad Day laborers	Day laborers Waste recycling
Timisoara	Urban	Mixed	Work abroad (Western Europe) Trade	Employment	Recycling (bottles and scrap metal)
Aninoasa (Iscroni quarter)	Urban	Low- to Extremely-Low Income		Mining Trade (second-hand clothing)	Recycling (scrap metal)
Iana	Rural	Low-Income		Agriculture Day laborers Retirement pensions	
Valcele (Araci, Ariusd, Hetea and Valcele)	Rural	Extremely Low- Income			Day laborers (local and itinerant) Informal manufacturing Gathering and trading
Ciopeia	Rural	Moderate to Low-Income	Work abroad (Western Europe) Trade	Trade (second-hand clothing)	
Nadrag	Rural	Extremely Low- Income		Employment Day laborers Gathering and trading	Day laborers

1. *Employment*: wage labor in the formal economy.

2. *Work Abroad*: employment sought in Western European or neighboring countries such as Hungary.

3. *Day Labor*: employment for predominantly low-income Roma as day laborers in agriculture or other sectors such as construction.

4. *Trade*: employment gained through itinerant trade or more formal trade in local and regional markets.

5. *Subsistence Occupations*: work including gathering and trading natural commodities such as fern leaves, forest fruits, or mushrooms, or recycling used materials such as clothing or scrap metal.

The poorest families survive on day labor and informal activities such as recycling waste, used iron, and other scrap metal. Two families interviewed for the study, one in Zabrauti and one in Timisoara, lived exclusively from scrap dealing and both lived in extreme poverty. This type of employment can have negative long-term consequences. Because of the itinerant nature of the work, older children were needed to help care for younger children while their parents were working, and thus were unable to attend school. Child labor was also evident in Valcele. Older children, over 14 years old, worked as day laborers with their parents.

ACCESS TO SOCIAL SERVICES

Roma poverty in Romania and other countries of Central and Eastern Europe is intertwined with numerous factors, including relatively low educational attainment and access to health care, social assistance, and housing. This section explores access to social services in the case study communities to illustrate general trends and the diversity of situations.

Education

Roma in Romania tend to have higher levels of illiteracy and lower levels of educational attainment than the total population. A 1992 study found that, compared to the estimated national illiteracy rate of 2 to 4 percent (Ministry of Education, Romania 1998), 44 percent of Roma men, and 59 percent of Roma women were illiterate in 1992, and an estimated 27 percent of Roma never attended school, or if they had, it was only for a few years (Zamfir and Zamfir 1993a; 1996). There is also evidence of worsening trends in recent years. Data from two nationally representative household surveys found that for Roma, the share of the population that had not completed basic education grew from 36 percent in 1994 to 44 percent in 1998.¹⁰

Low preschool attendance is a serious issue in Romania, which has implications for children's future participation in school. According to the 1992 census, 40 percent of children under the age of eight did not attend kindergarten or school. A more recent study from 1998 reported that 17 per-

cent of Roma children between the ages of three and six participated in preschool, in comparison with 60 percent of the whole population.¹¹ The share of Roma who continue beyond compulsory basic education is also dramatically lower than for the rest of the population. One study found only 7 percent of Roma men and 3 percent of Roma women completed secondary school, compared to 73 percent of men and 63 percent of women in the general population (OSI 2002). This study also reported that there was some evidence that the proportion of Roma completing secondary school has increased over the last two decades.

Considerable variation may exist among Roma groups in terms of participation in education. Zamfir and Zamfir (1993a) found that Roma children are proportionally more likely to regularly attend school if their fathers are employed, if they live in mixed rather than predominantly Roma communities (60 percent compared to 33 percent), and if their mothers have had more than eight years of schooling (73 percent) compared with mothers with no schooling (21 percent).

Further data suggests that the proportion of Roma pupils who drop out of school increases with age (Table 4.4). According to these data, at the age of seven, over half of all Roma children attend school, either regularly (49 percent) or occasionally (7 percent). By the age of nine, school attendance becomes the norm, with over 66 percent of Roma children enrolled full or part-time. However, between the ages of nine and thirteen, an increasing number of Roma students drop out of school. By age fifteen, the proportion of children attending regularly decreased by one third compared to rates of attendance at age 14. Over 15 percent of Roma 16 year olds reported that they never attended school.

The case studies confirmed the sharp decline in Roma school attendance after the fourth grade. The number of Roma students repeating the fourth grade was also higher than for other grades. In the schools in Valcele, for example, the proportion of Roma students enrolled in school steadily decreases with age (Table 4.5). In the first grade, Roma students

Table 4.4: Roma School Attendance Trends, National, 1993

Age (in years)	Number of Students in Sample	Rate of Attendance %			
		Regularly	Occasionally	Dropped Out	Never
7	139	48.4	6.6	8.8	36.3
8	348	44.6	14.9	7.0	33.5
9	318	52.4	13.9	10.4	23.4
10	404	51.4	15.5	14.2	18.9
11	318	48.4	15.1	19.6	16.9
12	458	42.4	15.6	20.7	21.3
13	377	43.3	17.2	21.8	17.6
14	402	41.0	13.2	37.6	8.3
15	442	29.4	9.4	41.5	19.6
16	111	30.5	8.5	45.8	15.3

Sources: Zamfir and Zamfir 1993; 1994.

make up 93 percent of all students. By the eighth grade, the percentage of Roma students declines to 53 percent. Many Roma students repeat grades. As a result, they tend to be older than average. The decline in the number of students in fourth grade may be related to the greater exposure to more teachers and subjects and the larger number of academic requirements. The stigma of repeating grades or receiving remedial instruction may also contribute to the high dropout rate among Roma.

Local Education Provision: Challenges and Opportunities

The organization of education differed across the study sites. Roma children were educated in separate classrooms in Zabrauti, Sf. Gheorghe, and Timisoara, while schools in Timisoara and Sf. Gheorghe offered some Roma language training. Four of the nine communities, Zabrauti, Babadag, Ciopeia, and Timisoara had at least one staff member who was able to speak the Roma language. Basic characteristics of education in the study sites are summarized in Table 4.6.

Table 4.5: Share of Roma Students in Valcele, 1999

Grade	Total Number of Students	% Roma	Roma Students Repeating the Grade	Over-aged Roma Students
1st grade	123	94	61	13
2nd grade	99	95	30	30
3rd grade	83	73	11	17
4th grade	72	82	3	11
5th grade	58	79	18	20
6th grade	28	64	4	6
7th grade	24	54	3	7
8th grade	15	53	n.a.	n.a.
Total	502	83	130	104

n.a. = not applicable

Source: Rughinis 2000.

Table 4.6: Access to Education in the Case Study Communities, 1999

Case Study Community	Special Classrooms For Roma	Hours of Roma Language	Roma-speaking Teachers and Staff	Concerns of Teachers and School Administrators	Concerns of Roma Parents and Students
Zabrauti	Within the local school	No ¹	Yes	Low parental support both material and educational	Discriminatory attitudes from teachers and non-Roma pupils.
Babadag	No	No	Yes	Absenteeism; high drop-out rates	Limited access to the "Step-by-Step" educational program due to prohibitive costs and administrative obstacles to enrollment.
Iana	No	No	No	None reported	Insufficient capacity (for kindergarten).
Sf. Gheorghe (Orko quarter)	Within a distinct school	Yes	No	Low parental support	Corruption and inefficiency in allocating support to students.
Valcele (villages of Araci, Ariusd, Hetea and Valcele)	No	No	No	Inadequate curriculum; Low parental support; Poor attendance; High drop-out rates	Discriminatory treatment and violence against Roma children.
Ciopeia	No	No	Yes		
Aninoasa (Iscroni quarter)	No	No	No	Low parental support; High drop-out rates	High costs of education; limited attention from teachers.
Timisoara	Within a private educational center	Yes Within a private educational center	Yes	Absenteeism; High drop-out rates	Corruption and incompetence (in the private educational center).
Nadrag	No	No	No	Poor results; Repeating grades	

1. One teacher on staff speaks the Roma language but does not offer Roma language instruction.

While educational opportunities for Roma differ throughout Romania, the Romanian Education Law itself does not stipulate the organization of general educational practices on the basis of ethnic criteria. An exception are schools organized for minority groups, in which all classes are conducted in the students' mother tongue. More

recently, however, the government has implemented a number of special educational initiatives targeted to the needs of Roma children (Box 4.2). Areas with majority or relatively high Roma populations may request tailored educational programs for their children. For example, in Zabrauti, special Roma language classes and a daily lunch

Box 4.2: Government Education Initiatives Targeting Roma

The Romanian Ministry of Education and Research has organized a number of educational initiatives specifically for Roma students. The “Second Chance” project is an experimental project which was organized in 1999 in cooperation with the Center for Education 2000+.¹ The program provides the opportunity for young Roma school drop-outs (aged 14–24 years) to complete basic primary and secondary school, together with additional vocational training. Graduation certificates are provided to those who successfully complete a 3.5 year program, giving students the possibility to register for the primary school graduation examination and facilitating access to the labor market.

As of 2001, the project had been implemented in eleven schools in six counties of Romania, with 300 students enrolled in the programs. In addition, 120 teachers have been trained in remedial education and student counseling, 16 monitors are responsible for monitoring the implementation process, and 10–14 Roma mediators facilitate cooperation between school and Roma communities. Some of the challenges faced by this project include a relatively high turnover of teachers, the need for more vocational apprenticeship opportunities in the community, and student drop-outs due to financial constraints.

As an extension of this project, the Ministry of Education and Research, in partnership with PHARE, launched the program: “Access to Education of All Disadvantaged Groups, with a Special Focus on the Roma Communities.”¹ The main objectives include increasing access to quality pre-school education, reducing the number of Roma children who drop out of school early, and providing drop-outs a second chance to complete basic education. Financing for the 2002–2004 implementation totals 8.3 million Euro, with 7 million Euro provided by PHARE, and the remainder from national co-financing.

Additionally, in 2000 the Ministry of Education reserved a limited number of places for Roma in high schools, vocational schools, teacher training colleges, and universities. Finally, to address the economic constraints to education, a new initiative is underway which provides free school supplies and a school snack to specific categories of children in need, including many Roma children.

Notes:

1. The Center for Education 2000+ was initiated in 1999 as a partnership between the Open Society Foundation Romania, and the Ministry of Education and Research. It aims to provide professional and financial assistance for the elaboration, implementation, and evaluation of educational programs in Romania.

2. See <http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/pas/phare/programmes/national/romania/2001>.

Sources: PHARE 2001; Center for Education 2000+ 2002.

program were organized for students in cooperation with the Step-by-Step program. While this program is no longer active in Zabrauti, it was reportedly well received by Roma in the community. Differences in educational practices are also the result of local conditions and attitudes.

ECONOMIC CONSTRAINTS. Both Roma and education personnel cite poverty and economic constraints as significant obstacles to education. Poor parents often cannot afford the necessary school supplies, shoes, clothing, and food. Teachers have observed that many Roma students report to school without proper food and clothing. One student in Iscroni explained that she had to stay home from school so that she could wash her only set of clothing. While many parents are able

to buy clothing second-hand, affordable shoes are more scarce. Schools provide free textbooks; however, most students were required to provide their own notebooks and school supplies, as well as a daily lunch. A group of Roma women interviewed in Valcele discussed the costs of sending children to school.

Now, before it is cold and before the earth freezes, they go more. After the winter comes, we won't send them any more—we don't have clothing and shoes... There is no food also. And the children won't stay: if we take them, they stay one hour and then they come running home, because they are hungry. They see the other children eating, and they aren't.

Another obstacle is the pressure for children to work and support the family income. Students who continue to attend school and stop working may be scorned by others in the community. Young Roma are often expected to work. A mother of seven children in Timisoara explained that older children, particularly girls, are often forced to stay home to care for younger siblings while their parents work.

I cannot send my children to school because I have nobody else to help me with the bottles. Look, I have small children—now if I go away, wandering on the roads for three months...with another baby coming... who will take care of them?

This pressure to work is particularly intense in the higher grades. A Roma student from Timisoara with an exceptional talent for math graduated from high school and was admitted to the Architecture Department of Timisoara University. While studying, he also taught math at the educational center for Roma students. Yet in his second year of university his father forced him to leave school to support the family. Although at the time of the interviews he was selling newspapers in Italy, his teachers reported that he was determined to continue his studies.

Absenteeism is not limited to poor families. More affluent families who rely on work abroad as their main source of income often require their school-aged children to accompany them during their travels, forcing the children to drop out of school. In Timisoara, many of these children have difficulty restarting school upon their return. This is not always the case. In communities such as Iscroni and Babadag, where more well-off families earn most of their income from local business or trade, parents were more inclined to send their children to school and often carefully monitored their performance. For example, in Iscroni, teachers reported that wealthy Roma families hired private tutors. These parents considered private tutoring necessary for their children to achieve a higher level of performance in school.

DEMAND FOR EDUCATION. The motivation of parents and their attitudes and expectations toward education also have an important influence on school attendance. Many parents resisted sending their children to school, citing reasons such as the need for their children to work, fears of discrimination and maltreatment of their children, and a general skepticism about the utility of education. Roma from Timisoara indicated that the most common occupations for Roma, such as trade and work abroad, did not require education. Others did not see how education would lead to higher employment. A young Roma mother from Iana was skeptical about whether her children's education would improve their chances of becoming anything more than agricultural workers, though she still hoped that they would benefit from education.

What can my children become? It is now as it was before—when could they ever become something? Never. They can pull the hoe but what else? May they learn well... yet they will work the land.

Some teachers blamed the absenteeism of Roma students on parents, either because they were not interested in their children's education, or because they felt that parents misused their resources and deprived their children of adequate food and clothing, which kept their children out of school. Lack of support at home for completing homework was noted by a number of teachers in Ciopeia and Iscroni.

On the other hand, many Roma emphasized the importance of education for their children. In addition to general feelings about the positive value of education, many cited practical reasons for sending their children to school, ranging from literacy, which is a basic qualification for many jobs, to gaining the required number of years in school for driver certification. Teachers in Zabrauti, Babadag, Iscroni, and Ciopeia noted that many Roma parents demonstrated an interest in their children getting at least a minimal education to improve their employment prospects.

DISCRIMINATION AND EXCLUSION. Another category of constraints to Roma education relates to discrimination and exclusion. Many Roma were reluctant to send their children to school due to fear of prejudice and lack of acceptance in the regular schools. A father of a Roma student from Zabrauti described the kind of stereotypes directed against his son by other non-Roma students.

The other children look at my children differently: 'Look at the Gypsies from Zabrauti!' Others are calling them 'Ghetto Boys!' ... So I sent my boy to the school with special classes, because it is closer and I have heard there is some assistance, some free notebooks... I have money now, but maybe next year I will not have any more, so I thought that a notebook and a pen would do good... But the boy didn't want to go: 'I won't go there, Daddy!' 'Why?' 'Why should they call me "Ghetto Boy" and mock me? Am I a "Ghetto Boy"?' So I sent him to the General School in [the neighboring] Sebastian quarter, to the normal school.

Other parents complained of discrimination against Roma and favoritism toward non-Roma students. Discrimination ranged from teachers ignoring their needs, pejoratively calling them "gypsies," and even violent treatment. In Valcele, some students complained that teachers either disregarded them or physically abused them. Students also complained some teachers only offered help to non-Roma students. One young mother from Iscroni complained that her son was held back from the second grade and said the blame should be placed on the teachers rather than the parents.

They didn't allow my child to graduate from the first grade... They wouldn't let him go. They don't take care of him, but they say it is my fault that I don't take care of him at home... But this is why I send him to school, to learn there.

Access to Health Care

Reliable information about the health status of Roma in Romania and their access to care is scarce or nonexistent. Yet there are identifiable trends. Roma life expectancy is significantly lower than that of the majority population, while child mortality and fertility rates are higher (Kalibova 2000). Compared with non-Roma, Roma are more likely to suffer from health conditions directly associated with poor nutrition and living conditions. A significant number of Roma have limited, or no access to medical care. A recent survey indicates that health insurance coverage rates among Roma are relatively low, with 37 percent of respondents indicating they did not have health insurance (UNDP 2003).

The case study communities have varying access to health care, based on their geographic locations (Table 4.7). Services are necessarily more limited in the more remote, rural areas. This is the case throughout the country, for both Roma and non-Roma. In Valcele, the two Roma communities are situated at the periphery of the commune on communal grazing land, and in an isolated village. The nearest medical center, in Araci, is two kilometers away. In Iana, some Roma reported that they travel over half an hour by cart to get to the nearest medical services. In both cases, lack of telephones in settlements was a barrier to emergency health services. Roma in rural areas also noted that physicians are not regularly available. One doctor worked in Valcele, and in Iana a part-time doctor consults only on Saturdays.

Family planning services are often not available in local health clinics and women sometimes must seek more expensive treatment from gynecologists in the nearest town. These women were reportedly more likely to have unwanted pregnancies, resort to abortions, or rely on informal information as their main source of information on family planning.

ECONOMIC CONSTRAINTS. Roma explained that the costs of medical services limited their access to care. These costs generally include payments for medication, and costs associated with hospital care. In all cases, except for Nadrag, outpatient visits were

Table 4.7: Roma Access to Local Medical Services in the Case Study Communities, 1999

Case Study Communities	Geographic Accessibility of Medical Services ¹	Availability of Medical Personnel	Use of Family Planning ²	Need Expressed by Medical Personnel	Concerns of Roma Respondents
Zabrauti	High	High	High	Immunizations Infant care Lack of ID papers	
Babadag	High	Low	High	Immunizations, infant care, pulmonary and skin diseases for children	
Iana	Low	Low	Low		
Sf. Gheorghe (Örko quarter)	High	High	Low	Immunizations, child care, affordable medications	Discriminatory treatment
Valcele (villages of Araci, Hetea and Valcele)	Low	Low	Low	Immunizations, infant care, scabies	Long distance to health services
Ciopeia	High	High	High	Immunizations, tuberculosis	
Aninoasa (Iscroni quarter)	High	High	Low	Immunizations	
Timisoara	High	High	High		
Nadrag	High	High	Low		High costs (Only private medical care is available)

1. Availability of a health clinic within a reasonable distance (including availability of transportation).

2. Access was considered low when respondents had systematic complaints about reproductive services; the use of family planning was considered high when the researchers encountered cases and/or reports of such practices – especially concerning contraception instead of abortions.

officially free of charge. In Nadrag, where the only medical center has been privatized, consultation costs, for adults as well as children, were as much as 75000 lei (US\$5). These costs made seeking medical care prohibitively expensive for many Roma families. Despite the absence of official fees, informal charges, particularly for hospital care and specialized services, are widespread. A woman from

Sf. Gheorghe recalled that she had gone to the hospital for an emergency appendectomy, but the doctors refused to treat her if she did not pay 50,000 lei (US\$3). A mother from Valcele explained the difficulties her daughter faced obtaining an abortion:

My daughter didn't want to have the baby... She even went to have an abor-

tion, but the doctor refused. She was in the third month, and the doctor could have done it, if he wanted. And I gave her money... I did the impossible almost, and I gave her 160,000 lei (around US\$10) but the doctor wouldn't do it. Maybe if I had four or five hundred, a million, maybe he would have done it. She went once and it was in vain. I sent her again, I forced her, she went to another doctor, but this one refused too. What should I have done—should I have killed her? May the child live—if it comes, it comes.

Compounding the prohibitive costs of health care was a general confusion over the rules of the health insurance system, which was introduced in 2000, at the time of the interviews. Under the insurance system, all Romanians need to be registered with a family physician in order to be eligible for care. For those working in the formal sector, contributions are made through payroll tax deductions, while the self-employed, including farmers, are supposed to make contributions on their own. The uninsured are to be covered by the state budget, with eligibility determined by registration for social assistance. However, because social assistance covers such a small share of the poor in Romania, many uninsured were not registered and fell through the cracks. Health care personnel and patients alike have been confused by the process, and many Roma have gone uninsured.

In Babadag, a doctor reportedly stopped providing subsidized medications to Roma, because she had received written instructions to provide them only to insured patients. The doctor noted that only one Roma household—a relatively well-off family engaged in cross-border informal trade—had paid their health insurance contribution (approximately US\$20 per month). Some Roma have also been left uninsured due to the increasing choice of family physicians to select only low risk patients. A physician in Tirgu Secuiesc, a town in Covasna County in the Transylvania region explained:

I do not register gypsies as a family physician. I do not accept gypsies... They come here and ask for money, ask for medicines... They have a lot of nerve. You have to keep an eye on them when they enter here. I do not think they are poorer than other people. They go to Hungary with business, they probably have more money than we have. They go by car to ask for social aid.

COMMUNICATION BETWEEN PATIENTS AND SERVICE PROVIDERS. One of the key factors influencing access to health care for Roma is the quality of communication between health care personnel and patients. While there are positive examples, this relationship is more often characterized by miscommunication, mistrust, and, in some cases, discrimination on behalf of the practitioner. The attitudes and perceptions of both patients and medical staff can have a significant impact on how health needs are conceptualized and the quality of service delivery. Roma noted that they were treated poorly by health personnel. A young mother from Sf. Gheorghe complained:

I don't know why, but some doctors speak so rudely with the people... when I went there and I saw this, I felt offended and I left. I went and I bought the medicines myself... They said, "Where are you hurrying? Wait", and other people went ahead of me, and they offended me. I felt like crying... I was waiting there for 2 or 3 hours, and afterwards they cursed me. So I went and I bought the medicines myself... it is better to go to the pharmacy. I tell them what hurts me and I ask for the proper medicine.

From their side, medical personnel frequently perceive Roma as irresponsible patients. Some providers felt that Roma parents often give their infants inappropriate food. Other doctors noted that children were dressed too warmly in the summer and not warmly enough in the winter, leading to pulmonary infections. Some expressed

concern about poor hygienic practices that can lead to skin diseases.

Medical staff also complained about the reliability of Roma patients in following their advice. Doctors noted that parents do not follow prescribed treatments for their children. A general practitioner in Babadag explained that Roma patients did not heed her advice, and took medicines irregularly. This doctor no longer trusts Roma parents to dispense expensive medicines at home, asserting that, "It would be a waste." Now she believes that Roma should be given treatments only if they are hospitalized and supervised by medical staff. These doctors indicated that they prefer to dispense medications through injections, so that they can control the treatment.

Medical staff claimed that Roma refuse to immunize their children. In Zabrauti, numerous Roma children were kept out of school because they did not have the appropriate immunization records. According to physicians, Roma parents refuse immunizations because of a general mistrust of formal medicine. Many Roma mothers fear immunizations that induce fever as a side effect. In Valcele, the doctor reported that nurses make repeated home visits to Roma families to immunize children, and are refused for various reasons. Some parents claim that their children are sick, while others say that their husbands would beat them if their child were immunized. In one particular polio vaccination campaign in Araci (a village in Valcele), the nurse recruited the police to accompany her on home visits. After a few days, a rumor spread in the village that the vaccine was really a sterilization device and the campaign was quickly abandoned.

Some health care officials have resorted to tricking their patients in order to persuade them to get immunized. A doctor from Babadag explained:

[Roma] have been never willing to have their children be vaccinated... We have to motivate them with methods adequate to their values. For instance we told them that a vaccine is very expensive, 60,000 lei, and we administer it for free now, later they

will have to buy it. We threatened some illiterate parents with false papers, telling them that they will have to pay penalties if they do not have the children to come for vaccination. [She displays the false penalty certificate, smiling]. We put a lot of stamps on it... Sometimes we brought policemen with us in the area to be more convincing. And it worked many times.

A doctor in Iscroni relied on the same method as the nurse in Araci, often sending local police officers with nurses on vaccination campaigns. Some doctors reported that they threatened parents by telling them that they would restrict their eligibility for medicines unless their children were immunized. Until 1993, doctors in Sf. Gheorghe made the distribution of powdered milk for infants conditional on the child being immunized. Some teachers in Örko even admitted locking Roma children in a classroom so that the nurses could immunize them.

It is difficult to gauge the degree to which these problems are related to distrust of the health system by Roma, or other factors, including low education levels and economic incentives. A doctor in Zabrauti, for example, claimed that many Roma patients come for free medication. If the medication was not free, she predicted, they would resort to more traditional remedies. Roma resented these assumptions. In Babadag, for example, Roma protested the suggestion that they sought out "old women's advice" rather than modern medical treatments. "We don't go to old women," they remarked, "we go to the doctor."

Access to Social Assistance

Social assistance cash benefits are an important source of income for many poor Roma families. Because of the deep fiscal crisis of the transition period, the availability of social assistance benefits has been severely restricted throughout Romania. Alongside the budgetary constraints, the transfer of responsibility for delivering social assistance benefits to local governments has left benefits unpaid in many of the poorest areas. Local governments have become caught in a

vicious circle of impoverishment. The poorest municipalities which have the greatest need for social assistance—are least able to pay them. In response, local officials have used their own discretion to adopt various coping strategies, such as limiting coverage of benefits by creating additional eligibility criteria, decreasing the level of benefits, or ceasing payments altogether (World Bank 2000d).

As a whole, coverage of social assistance has dropped to extremely low levels in Romania.¹² The country's main monthly cash benefit program for the poor, the Means Tested Social Assistance Benefit Program (MTSAB) reaches very few households. In some of the case study communi-

ties, benefits were either paid irregularly or stopped altogether. Benefits were available on a regular basis in Zabrauti, Iscroni, Timisoara, and Nadrag, and only intermittently in Sf. Gheorghe and Ciopeia. MTSAB benefits were discontinued for over three years in Iana, two years in Babadag, and one year in Valcele (Table 4.8).

In Babadag, the number of households receiving social assistance dropped dramatically from 1,207 families in 1995 to 75 in 1998, due to the budget constraints. The mayor estimated that approximately 75 percent of those who lost benefits were Roma. Even though the households may have been eligible according to the national legislation, local officials limited eligibility based

Table 4.8: Access to Social Assistance in Case Study Communities, 1999

Case Study Community	Social Problems	Means-Tested Income Support	Eligibility Criteria
Zabrauti	Sub-standard housing	Available Extreme poverty	None
Babadag	Extreme poverty	Discontinued	For school scholarships, recipients must submit a passport as proof they have not traveled abroad.
Iana	Extreme poverty	Discontinued	
Sf. Gheorghe (Örko quarter)	Sub-standard housing Extreme poverty	Intermittent	None
Valcele (villages of Araci, Ariusd, Hetea and Valcele)	Sub-standard housing Extreme poverty	Discontinued	
Ciopeia		Intermittent	Social worker discretion
Aninoasa (Iscroni quarter)	Sub-standard housing Extreme poverty	Available	None
Timisoara		Available	School attendance; proof of land ownership; active job search. For educational grants: proof of unemployment.
Nadrag	Substandard housing Extreme poverty	Available	None

upon additional criteria, because they could not afford to finance all eligible beneficiaries. One official believed that many Roma applications were rejected on illegal grounds. "Many of these families have been denied benefits on the grounds that the head of the household is able to work," he remarked, "or because they have a television, or a pig, or because they live with their parents... or because somebody has some information that they are involved in trade."

In some cases, additional eligibility criteria may create positive incentives for beneficiaries, if they are—for example—required to work or send their children to school. In other cases, additional rules may exclude beneficiaries who are unable to work, or lack the necessary documentation for receiving benefits. In Timisoara, the city council and mayor restricted access to benefits by adding a mandatory work requirement of five days per month. Children were also required to attend school, and benefits were only paid to those who could prove permanent residence in Timisoara. Additional restrictions included asset tests, which excluded households which owned land and animals. The number of aid recipients dropped from 3,000 in 1995 to 306 in January 1998.

Similar strategies were adopted for the payment of school scholarships for low income families. These education benefits are paid to poor households to cover school-related expenses. In Babadag the school director devised a method to exclude some Roma families which had incomes from informal trade. He asked the Roma parents to bring their passports to school to prove that they had no visas, and consequently no incomes from trade. The director reported that this reduced the number of Roma applicants substantially. Other Roma children were excluded from receiving benefits because they had not passed certain exams. In one of the Timisoara schools, the principal decided to ask the parents to submit a formal proof of unemployment and other documents in order to apply for benefits.

Roma expressed dissatisfaction with the reductions in social assistance, and particularly with the disparities across localities. Roma in areas where benefits were paid irregularly were aware that benefits were being paid elsewhere. A

Roma woman from Babadag explained: "I received benefits twice... In Cernavoda they pay it every month, why is it that we don't receive this money? In Medgidia they give it every month, why don't we get it?" Her comments also reflect a common perception among Roma of the disparity in the availability and levels of social assistance between municipalities. In Timisoara, a Roma woman explained the difficulty of her situation: she no longer received benefits because she did not send her children to school. However, she could not afford to send her daughter to school due to reductions in her benefits. While she collects bottles in order to support the family, her older daughter must take care of the younger children and subsequently cannot attend school.

Access to Housing

An increasing number of Romanians, both Roma and non-Roma, risk exclusion from housing as a result of privatization and housing restitution, changes in the legal status of land, and declining incomes. Many Roma in Romania live in integrated areas, while others live in urban slums, such as Zabrauti in Budapest, or rural settlements, such as Iana and Nadrag. Many urban and rural Roma communities suffer from a lack of infrastructure and services. Poor infrastructure—bad roads, lack of water or sewage systems, and absence of telephone lines are more pronounced in rural areas. Internal migration from rural to urban communities has contributed to the expansion of urban settlements and to the growth of an informal system of supplementary social security where rents, gas, and electricity bills are unpaid but evictions and stoppages do not immediately occur (Save the Children 2001a).

Conditions in Roma neighborhoods are frequently poor, with problems of extreme overcrowding and a lack of social services. According to 1998 household data, Roma living quarters in Romania are—on average—20 percent smaller than those of non-Roma, although Roma household size is significantly larger.¹³ Lack of access to utilities, such as water, gas, electricity, and public services such as waste collection, is a significant problem in many neighborhoods. In 1998, only 24 percent of Roma in Romania had access to public

water facilities within their housing units, compared to 46 percent of the total population. Similarly, 34 percent of Roma households have no toilet facilities (indoor or outdoor), in comparison with 28 percent of total households.

The absence of quality and affordable housing was an issue flagged by Roma in almost all of the case site communities. In Zabrauti, Nadrag, and Iscroni, where most residents live in public housing owned by the city, people mentioned poor maintenance and the lack of investment in housing. In Nadrag, residents reported that they were unable to pay their rents or electricity costs, and houses are often in extremely poor repair. As one young mother reported:

The toilets are broken... Yesterday our administrator called us to clean everything, because, he said, an inspector is going to come... He is a very kind man, he helps us. He provided us with a hose to clean here, because it was such a misery, you couldn't count the dirt piles here... Because we have only two toilets, but they are broken, and the misery spills out.

In Aninoasa, the Roma neighborhood consists of dilapidated barracks with outside water taps and nonfunctioning public toilets. In the Örko neighborhood of Sf. Gheorghe, most people do not own the land on which their houses are built and the neighborhood has outdoor plumbing that poses a serious health risk. In the rural communities of Valcele and Iana, young couples often build homes illegally, due to the scarcity of affordable land. Illegal housing is also a problem in Zabrauti, where houses often have outside water taps, improvised electrical installation, and lack central heating or gas connections.

Because of the legacy of state-provided public housing during the socialist period, expectations among the population are high. Most Roma expect that local governments will address housing shortages and improve the quality of existing houses. Local government responses in the sites have varied. In Valcele, the mayor's office proposed granting land to Roma to build new housing on communal grazing land, but the plan was

opposed by the city council. Roma from Valcele were disappointed that the mayor had broken her electoral promise to provide them with land. In Zabrauti, UNDP, in cooperation with the local mayor's office, initiated the legal transformation of four buildings, which residents had occupied illegally as squatters, into official public housing. While the project was legally approved, implementation has proven difficult. In addition to these bureaucratic obstacles, some tenants have had difficulty meeting rental requirements due to lack of identification papers or criminal records, and faced evictions.

In Sf. Gheorghe, where the community center functions as a homeless shelter and a temporary housing facility, the mayor proposed a comprehensive urban renewal strategy for the Roma neighborhood. The mayor of Aninoasa intends to move all of the inhabitants of the Roma quarter of Iscroni to another quarter situated at the periphery of the town in order to build a new civic center in a central location. While the move would entail an improvement in housing conditions, Iscroni residents oppose the initiative, most likely because of the undesirable location.

SOCIAL AND ETHNIC RELATIONS

Relations between Roma and the Majority Population

The frequency and quality of contact between Roma and non-Roma varies, depending in part on the geographic location of Roma communities, but also on the socioeconomic status and the age of the settlement. In general, the relationship between Roma and non-Roma has been characterized by miscommunication and mistrust. Equally, aspects of Roma society may contribute to their isolation, as well as to popular stereotypes and myths. Indeed, Roma social exclusion may be traced in part to the nature of their interaction with non-Roma, and the mutual construction and negotiation of boundaries between communities.

The strongest evidence of continuing mistrust is the lack of geographic integration of Roma and non-Roma communities. With the exception of Iana, Roma and non-Roma in the study sites gen-

erally do not live together. Rather, Roma tend to constitute relatively segregated pockets located next to non-Roma neighborhoods. In Iana, which was first settled in 1864, Roma are more integrated, particularly in comparison to more recent and heterogeneous communities, such as Zabrauti in Bucharest. Nevertheless, despite the high level of integration between these groups, Roma are still pejoratively called "Gypsies." In Iana, there were a number of mixed marriages, while they were found to be rare elsewhere.

In other communities, relations between Roma and non-Roma are reportedly much more strained, and reflect a high degree of social distance based on a lack of contact between ethnic groups. Such isolation starts young. Roma children in Zabrauti are not fully integrated into mainstream classes and are still required to attend "experimental classes" which are not only segregated, but are also relatively isolated within the school building. The teacher reported that Roma students often do not mingle with other children during breaks.

The socioeconomic status of Roma also has a bearing on interethnic relations, as well as relations between Roma groups. Wealthier Roma are more integrated, often adopting some of the cultural practices of Romanians. For example, in Babadag, despite the high proportion of Muslim Roma, and lingering adherence to traditional dress and customs, most Roma names are Romanian rather than Muslim in origin. Furthermore, most Roma women, particularly wealthier ones, get married in traditional white bride's dresses customary in Romanian wedding ceremonies. Some Roma in Ciopeia are relatively well off and have two-story houses and more expensive cars. In general, Roma in Ciopeia reported fewer tensions between ethnic groups. However, difficulties remain. As one Romanian respondent remarked, "We have no enemies, but also no friendships with the gypsies." Examples of tensions and discrimination were reported involving access to running water, land distribution, and to community celebrations.

Relations with Public Officials and NGOs

Relationships between Roma and public officials are mixed, depending largely upon individ-

uals and circumstances. In some cases, Roma reported encountering sympathetic officials who recognize and attempt to accommodate the particular needs of Roma, but more often they reported encountering indifference, hostility, intolerance, and corruption of officials who are already strained by inadequate resources.

One of the dominant stereotypes about Roma is that they are the "undeserving poor." The pervasiveness of this view was evident in discussions with local officials. In Hetea, a Roma village in Valcele, the Romanian administrator of a Dutch aid program described Roma as "thieves" and "lazy." In Babadag, local officials were reluctant to pay social assistance to Roma citing similar reasons. The Mayor himself claimed that Roma do not work but "stay in the pubs all day long," grow nothing on their land, and are overly reliant on trade. Not everyone ascribes to such beliefs. The social assistance coordinator in Babadag denounced the widely held conception that "Everything bad that happens is the gypsies' fault," arguing that special programs are needed in order to improve the situation of the Roma.

Relations with local police were frequently described as strained. In Zabrauti, Roma reported frequent police raids and fines for squatting. Over time, relations with the police have evolved from what the Roma perceived as arbitrary, punitive, and often violent interventions, to the total absence of a police presence.

Finally, the success of a number of outside development initiatives was threatened by pervasive mistrust and suspicion between program administrators and the community. This was most evident in Sf. Gheorghe where Roma inhabitants accused a priest and teachers who were involved in a project of stealing donations. On the other hand, program administrators accused Roma of misusing aid and failing to abide by the goals of the programs. The examples of these programs highlight the importance of cooperative relationships between the state and local service providers. For example, in Zabrauti coordination between the assistance program and the local administration was effective and facilitated the project. The Mayor of the fifth district of

Bucharest, which governs Zabrauti, was a partner in the program and allocated resources. Local officials also managed to secure the doctor's cooperation to improvise medical records in order to allow Roma children to attend the local kindergarten.

CURRENT POLICY DEVELOPMENTS

Over the last decade, significant efforts have been made by government, political parties, and nongovernmental organizations toward improving the condition of Roma in Romania. While many of these efforts have been improvised and uncoordinated, there is evidence that efforts are beginning to draw on more than a decade of project learning and experience in order to implement a more coherent, systematic approach. The adoption of a national strategy to improve the condition of Roma in 2001 reflects such efforts.

Since 1989, Romania has ratified the main international documents addressing racial and ethnic discrimination. In November 2000, Romania became the first EU candidate country to enact general antidiscrimination legislation. In April 2001, a law on public administration was enacted allowing for the use of minority languages in areas where minorities constitute 20 percent of the population.¹⁴ The use of non-Romanian languages in criminal and civil proceedings is also constitutionally guaranteed, although this does not always happen in practice.

Specialized institutions dealing with minorities have also been set up. In 1993, the Council for National Minorities was established as a consultative body of the Romanian Government. A Department for the Protection of National Minorities was established in 1997 within the Prime Minister's Office, including an Office for Social Integration of Roma.¹⁵ Following the 2000 elections, these offices were relocated to the Ministry of Public Information and renamed the Department of Inter-Ethnic Relations, and the National Office for Roma.

At the parliamentary level, there are standing commissions on minorities and human rights which function both within the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies. After 1989, a number of Roma political parties were established, including the Democratic Roma Union, the Ethnic Fed-

eration of the Roma, the Roma Party, and the Roma Union. Despite these improvements, Roma remain underrepresented in local political institutions. While there are currently no Roma Senators, during the November 2000 elections, a member of the Roma Party was elected to the Chamber of Deputies.

Both Roma and non-Roma organizations have played an important role in discussions and agenda setting with respect to Roma affairs, particularly concerning the development of a national strategy for Roma. Approximately 150 NGOs in Romania are devoted to promoting the rights and interests of Roma and pressing for change in minority policies.¹⁶ However, the small size and marginal resources of many of these NGOs limit their influence.

The National Strategy for Improving the Condition of Roma

In April 2001, the Government adopted the "National Strategy of the Government for Improving the Condition of Roma," which aims at stimulating the participation of Roma in the economic, social, educational, and political life of society through their involvement in sectoral assistance and community development programs, as well as through programs for the prevention of institutional and societal discrimination.

The duration of the strategy is intended to be 10 years (2001–2010), with the first four-year action plan focusing on the following areas: administration and community development, housing, social security, health, economy, justice, child welfare, education, culture, communication, and civic involvement. The Strategy is organized, coordinated, and implemented through a series of structures including the establishment of a Joint Implementation and Monitoring Committee, Ministerial Commissions for Roma, County Offices for Roma, and local experts for Roma issues.

Progress and Challenges

The adoption of the National Strategy marks a significant milestone in the official policy approach toward improving the situation of Roma. One of its greatest strengths is that the

Box 4.3: The Partnership Fund for Roma: Pilot Projects

Between January 2001 and April 2002, the Partnership Fund for the Roma,¹ a grant-fund made available by the European Commission's PHARE programme, provided 900,000 Euro to support 40 pilot projects for improving the situation of Roma communities in Romania. In keeping with the principles and goals of the National Strategy, the main aims of these projects were to test policy initiatives of the Romanian government, and to support partnerships between local authorities and Roma organizations. These projects tested many of the action items included in the National Strategy, such as new schools for Roma children, vocational and pre-school projects, the renovation of apartment blocks, income-generating projects, Roma-managed farms, an environmental project, and health projects. All projects were subject to on-going monitoring and evaluation and were offered technical assistance by the local management organization (The Roma Communities Resource Center—the RCRC—in Cluj Napoca) as well as by the PHARE team.

A recent evaluation found these pilot projects to be generally successful. Many provide useful examples of positive partnering between a range of public institutions (schools, town halls, regional inspectorates, and prefectures) and Roma organizations. These experiences also grant valuable insights into the specific kinds of challenges and misunderstandings that arise in such collaborative attempts. Some PHARE staff and Roma NGO leaders have raised concerns about the longer-term sustainability of individual projects, as well as the degree to which the lessons learned will be incorporated into policy affecting the situation of Roma. The original Fund has been amalgamated with the RCRC and in 2002, they received a new grant fund from PHARE Romania (The Civil Society Development, Improvement of Roma Situation Fund).

Note:

1. The Partnership Fund for the Roma was a component of a larger, PHARE funded project called The Improvement of the Roma Situation in Romania. The two main aims of the project, developed by leading Roma and government representatives as well as the EC Delegation were to provide technical assistance to the Government of Romania for the development and implementation of a strategy for the improvement of the Roma situation and the implementation of the Partnership Fund.

Source: Murray 2000.

strategy was elaborated with the participation of delegates from the Ministries as well as Roma leaders and representatives from a variety of non-governmental organizations. The strategy's priorities are widely seen by Roma and non-Roma leaders as reflecting those articulated by Roma representatives.

The National Strategy for Roma is to be carried out through a series of institutions established at multiple levels of government, each of which is intended to include both government and Roma representatives. This includes a Roma Office within the Ministry of Public Information, which will have judet-level representation, commissions within ministries, to address sectoral policy, and a government-level Joint Implementation and Monitoring Committee to oversee organization and implementation of the strategy. While significant progress has been made in establishing these institutions, there is considerable variation in the degree to which they are

currently able to contribute to furthering the Strategy's goals. The initiation of 40 pilot projects has provided valuable experience and lessons about the opportunities for collaborative efforts between local officials and Roma representatives (Box 4.3).

While these steps represent important progress, much work remains in further elaborating and strengthening the institutional infrastructure and implementation of the Strategy. While a number of structures have been put in place, the degree to which they are active varies considerably. There is also a general lack of clarity about the specific roles and responsibilities of representatives at different levels. Further, questions have been raised about the criteria used for appointing county and local representatives. The Roma Party has developed a close relationship with the Social Democratic government elected in 2000. While this has granted the Roma Party greater influence over Roma affairs it has also prompted criticisms

about the politicization of Roma appointments in the public administration. Finally, an ongoing concern is the lack of systematic monitoring, evaluation, and enforcement of the strategy.

CONCLUSIONS

This study of Roma in nine communities in Romania demonstrates that Roma face a number of interlinking challenges. Each of these communities has faced varying degrees of labor market exclusion, limited access to education, health, social assistance, and housing. The case studies demonstrate that the nature and extent of this poverty and exclusion reflect both localized geographic and economic conditions, and the considerable diversity among Roma populations. These challenges point to the need for integrative policies that can be adapted to local circumstances.

The cases showed variation in relations between Roma and non-Roma, from integration to exclusion. They also suggested a relationship between geographic and economic exclusion. Rural communities lack basic infrastructure and utilities, and have more limited economic opportunities and access to education and health care than urban communities. Moreover, while regional economic conditions were found to be influential on Roma living conditions and economic opportunities in general, Roma in all localities tended to be worse off than their non-Roma counterparts. Few Roma were employed in the formal economy, rather, the majority relied on other sources, including trade and day labor.

Access to social services is hampered by a variety of interrelated factors. Persistently low levels of educational attainment reflect difficulties in accessing education due to economic constraints, discrimination by educators, as well as Roma attitudes toward education. Relations between Roma and non-Roma were found to play an important role in perpetuating patterns of exclusion. Miscommunication and distrust on both sides compound other forms of exclusion. Efforts such as the training of Roma mediators to facilitate “back to school” programs represent a positive step toward improving the communication between Roma communities and service providers.

NOTES

1. This chapter is based on a qualitative study of nine Roma communities in Romania in 2000 conducted by Cosima Rughinis and Marian Preda.

2. For example, in 1461–2, the Wallachian ruler Vlad IV Tepes (the Impaler) brought 11,000–12,000 Roma from Bulgaria, while in 1471, the Moldavian ruler Stephen the Great reportedly brought 17,000 Roma to use as slave labor (Crowe 1994).

3. Such laws were passed to restrict the freedom of movement of Roma slaves, to forbid inter-ethnic marriage, and to discourage escape attempts, and the illegal trade in slaves (Crowe 1994).

4. By some accounts, official policy was not to annihilate the Roma per se, but to ensure that they were removed from tainting the Romanian nation. However, according to the War Crimes Commission established by the Romanian People’s Court, 36,000 Roma died during the war, constituting the highest absolute number of Roma deaths of any European country. Those who survived are reported to have lived in relative freedom, with some even serving in the Romanian national army (CEDIME-SE 2001).

5. Ceaucescu’s “systemization” program uprooted many Roma and non-Roma communities.

6. Based on a poverty line of US\$4.30 per capita per day.

7. For example, according to an “Ethno-barometer” survey taken in 2000, it was reported that 38–40 percent of non-Roma would prohibit Roma from settling in their country; 23 percent of ethnic Romanians and 31 percent of ethnic Hungarians would refuse to accept Roma in their city, town, or village. Another recent poll (2000) found that 67 percent of the population feel resentment toward the Roma (OSI 2001).

8. According to the 1993 study, only a small proportion of the Roma population (7 percent of adult men) practiced traditional trades, while a larger proportion of the population acquired “modern” skills (35 percent of adult men). The large majority of the sample—58 percent of men and 85 percent of women—reported having no

trade (either traditional or modern) (Zamfir and Zamfir 1993b).

9. The descriptions of income levels are based upon the observations of the field researchers and provide only a rough indication of relative welfare in the different communities.

10. Data from the 1998 Romania Integrated Household Survey.

11. This study, cited in Save the Children (2001), was conducted by the Open Society Institute and the Central European University Centre for Policy Studies for their country report on Romania.

12. Since this study was conducted, social assistance reforms have improved its effectiveness and coverage. Positive effects for Roma have been noted including: (i) greater access to ID cards; (ii) improved targeting to the unemployed through a workfare requirement; and (iii) increased social capital generated by the participation of Roma and non-Roma in workfare activities.

13. Data are from the Romanian Integrated Household Survey, 1998.

14. Estimates indicate that the Roma population is unlikely to reach 20 percent in most, or all, territorial administrative units (OSI 2001).

15. Under the supervision of the Department, a limited number of initiatives were undertaken within the Framework of the Strategy. The Ministry of Labor and Social Solidarity formulated a special program for Roma involvement in local departments for labor and social protection. In parallel, the General Police Inspectorate implemented programs for preventing violence in localities and communities with the participation of Roma organizations and associations (UN 2001).

16. A list of Romanian Roma NGOs, compiled by the Resource Center for Roma Communities, is available at: <<http://www.romacenter.ro>>.

Chapter Five: PROJECT EXPERIENCE IN HUNGARY

Since 1989, more policy and project activity related to Roma has taken place in Hungary than in any other country in Central and Eastern Europe. Considerable research has been conducted; a wide range of Roma-related NGOs have been set up; and numerous projects and pilot projects have been implemented. Successive governments have played an active role in policy setting. Nevertheless, Roma remain among the most marginalized groups in Hungary. As Chapter Two illustrated, their socioeconomic conditions remain well below the national average. There is still room for improvement in the development of effective policies for Roma and integration into Hungarian society.

This chapter marks a departure from the country studies of the two previous chapters, focusing on the experience of projects and policies. It explores reasons why Hungary has seen a generally higher level of activity on Roma issues and minorities policies than other countries in the region, and examines some of the project experience close up. It concludes with an assessment of some of the lessons learned from the experiences of selected projects, and points to future directions in national policy. Looking to the future is important because of the large and growing share of the Roma population in the country—estimated at between 4 and 6 percent. The significant size of the Roma population in Hungary, and the marked deterioration of its living standards during the transition are important factors which continue to motivate government attention.

A REGIONAL FRONTRUNNER

There has been a far greater proliferation of Roma policies and programs in Hungary than in other countries. Why? In the first place, Hungary's post-transition development process has

been both faster and more successful than most. Hungary has been among the leading countries in the EU accession process. Second, Hungary has historically had a greater involvement in minority issues than its neighbors, because of the large number of Hungarians who live as minorities in other countries. Third, the growth of civil society has been more rapid in Hungary than in other countries.

EU Accession

The EU accession process has accelerated the adoption of policies related to minorities in Hungary. While the process has influenced developments in neighboring countries, the impact came earlier in Hungary. Integration into the EU has been a key goal of Hungary since 1990. In December 1991, Hungary and Poland were the first countries in Central and Eastern Europe to sign association agreements with the EU. In March 1994, Hungary became the first of the transition countries to submit an official application for membership. Hungary has long been considered a frontrunner for accession, given its relatively high level of development. Formal negotiations commenced in 1998 and were concluded in December 2002.¹ Following the EU's decision to offer admission to ten accession countries, including Hungary, at the Copenhagen summit in December 2002, these countries are expected to be able to take part in European Parliament elections in June 2004 as members, following ratification of the accession treaty by the European and national parliaments.²

EU policy relating to ethnic minorities, and Roma in particular, informs the political criteria for accession under the subchapter on "human rights and the protection of minorities" that was adopted at the 1993 Copenhagen European Coun-

cil. In its 2002 Regular Report on Hungary's progress toward accession, the European Commission concluded that Hungary has adopted most of the major international legislation on human rights and has developed a wide-ranging institutional framework for the protection of minorities. However, it lacks a unified law against discrimination. Current antidiscrimination provisions are fragmented and are included in laws regulating different fields—such as employment and education (Kádár et al. 2001). Since the 2001 Regular Report, Hungary has continued to make progress on the short term Accession Partnership priority: the implementation of the government's Medium-Term program for the integration of Roma. According to the 2002 Regular Report:

The institutional framework [of the Medium-Term program] has been further strengthened and a new monitoring system introduced. Still, Roma policy is not well integrated into general social development strategies and exists as a separate and parallel project. Roma continue to suffer discrimination. The Government is currently revising its Roma policy. The envisaged adoption of a comprehensive long-term strategy and comprehensive antidiscrimination legislation would be major steps forward in this regard (Commission 2002).

Over the past decade, the EU has provided support to Hungary for Roma projects and programs to meet the objectives of the Copenhagen criteria. Between 1992 and 2001, the PHARE Program allocated 1,259 million Euro to Hungary, and another 120.7 million Euro in 2002.³ PHARE support on Roma issues has been earmarked for projects in education, community development, policy formulation, and monitoring.

Hungarian Minorities and Minority Policies

Hungary's approach toward its ethnic minorities has been influenced by a concern for the rights of Hungarians living as minorities in other countries (Crowe 1991; 1994) (Table 5.1). The reorganization of Hungarian territory in the

wake of World War I led to the relocation of millions of former citizens, mostly Hungarians, to other countries. Following the division of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the 1920 Treaty of Trianon, Hungary lost nearly 70 percent of its previous territory, and 60 percent of its total population, including 28 percent of the Hungarian speakers and the large bulk of its minorities. Hungarians continue to make up substantial shares of the population in a number of neighboring countries: nearly 10 percent in Slovakia (2001), 7 percent in Romania (1992), and 4 percent in Austria and Yugoslavia (1991).

Policies toward Hungarian minorities abroad do not necessarily translate into the full realization of domestic minority policies. For example, Roma, who are classified as an "ethnic minority," rather than a "national minority," were not originally covered under early drafts of the Minorities Act (Cahn 2001).

The Growth of Civil Society

Hungary's attention to minority concerns is also a function of the significant level of development of civil society in the country. NGO activity has been greater in Hungary than in many other countries of the region, in part because of the less restrictive nature of Hungarian communist rule

Table 5.1: Hungarian Minorities in Other Countries

Country	Year	Number	Percentage of Total Population
Austria	1991 census (based on language)	33,459	4.3
Croatia	1991 census	22,355	0.5
Romania	1992 census	1,624,956	7.1
Slovakia	2001 census	520,528	9.7
Yugoslavia	1991 census (taken while still united)	345,376	3.9

Source: Government Office for Hungarian Minorities Abroad, <http://www.htmh.hu/english.htm>; Slovak Statistical Office.

and earlier adoption of legislation regulating the sector (Bárány 2002). While the socialist era was characterized by a state monopoly of all spheres of political, social, and economic life, civil organizations, including Roma organizations, were able to secure gradually more autonomy than those under more totalitarian regimes, which did not even allow the formation of such groups (Bárány 2002).

The Hungarian Civil Code, adopted in 1959, provided for the establishment of civil society organizations (Jenkins 1999). This code explicitly recognized, although under strict administrative control, "social organizations," including political groups, trade unions, and organizations of women, youth, and other groups. Many of the early organizations formed in the final years of socialism survived the transition in 1989, changing their names and transforming themselves into new legal entities (Jenkins 1999). For example, many informal political associations became political parties. In 1993 a unique type of governmentally supported NGO, the "public foundation," was formed (Box 5.1).

This legacy has contributed to the remarkable post-transition growth in civil society organizations. The NGO sector grew fivefold between 1989 (with just under 8,800 organizations) and 1995 (with more than 43,000 registered organizations) (Jenkins 1999).⁴ At the same time, the number of organizations involved in social policy has increased significantly, from virtually no presence in the early 1980s, to between one-fifth and one-fourth of NGO activity in 1995. There are also numerous associations active in the areas of culture, religion, and business.

Many of these organizations have focused on the expansion of services and rights for ethnic minorities in general, and for Roma in particular. In the last decade, the greater availability of state and NGO funding for Roma issues has led to a rapid proliferation in Roma organizations and events. By the end of 1991, 96 civic bodies concerned with such issues were officially registered (Kállai and Törzsök 2000).⁵ By 1994–1995 there were nearly 500 organizations, and by 1998, there were over 1,000 registered Roma organizations, including self-governments (dis-

cussed further below) and self-organized groups (Kováts 2001a).

Despite this growth in activity, the influence of many groups is limited by inadequate access to financing. Only a small number have survived for more than a few years because of legislative, financial, and organizational problems (PER 1998). Most NGOs, including those concerned with Roma issues, are small and donor driven, "their existence tied to the implementation of specific projects and their activities defined at least in part by the agendas of the organizations that fund them" (OSI 2001).

GOVERNMENT POLICIES AND APPROACHES

Successive Hungarian governments have played an active role in policymaking and establishing institutions to address minority policies, and Roma issues in particular. Perhaps most notably, in 1993, Hungary adopted the Minorities Act which granted considerable cultural, educational, and linguistic rights to Hungary's thirteen recognized minorities through a system of national and local minority self-governments (MSGs).⁶ This system is unique to Hungary. The country has also established an Office for National and Ethnic Minorities and the independent Minorities Ombudsman to oversee minority rights and protections. Most recently, following elections in 2002, the government established a new Roma Office under the Office of the Prime Minister, to coordinate Roma policy across the government.⁷

Government funding for minorities is distributed through multiple channels (Table 5.2). Roma populations often benefit from general programs for minorities. For example, the largest budget allocation goes to the education of minorities. In 1999, a total of 4.6 billion forints was allocated for preschools, schools, and dormitories for national and ethnic minorities, and for additional subsidies for non-minority bilingual educational institutions (Implementation Report 1999). In 1999/2000, the Public Foundation for National and Ethnic Minorities provided support for 586 secondary school Roma students and 111 Roma university students.⁸ Budgetary allocations specifically targeted for Roma include those

Table 5.2: Government Budgetary Support for Minorities

	1997 (million HUF)	1998 (million HUF)	1999 (million HUF)
National Self-Governments for Minorities	306.0	398.7	506.0
Roma National Self-Government	96.0	120.0	138.0
Local Self-Governments for Minorities	300.0	350.0	730.0
Minority civil organizations	70.0	79.1	87.8
Public Foundation for National and Ethnic Minorities in Hungary	395.0	474.0	530.0
Public Foundation for Hungarian Gypsies	170.0	250.0	280.0
Minority Coordination and Intervention Budget ¹	50.0	55.0	44.0
Ministry of Education, for minority tasks	274.9	290.0	250.0
Gandhi Foundation	325.0	230.0	210.0
Minority theaters	62.0	67.0	74.0
Ministry of National Cultural Heritage (support for cultural programs and minority literature)	—	—	100.0

— Not applicable.

1. The Minority Coordination and Intervention Budget is used for solving crisis situations concerning minorities that require urgent resolution.

Source: Implementation Report, 1999.

for the Roma national and local minority self-governments, the Public Foundation for Hungarian Gypsies, and the Gandhi Foundation. The Gandhi Foundation has also received a significant proportion of government financing, beginning with 325 million forints in 1997 and falling to 210 million forints in 1999.⁹

Office for National and Ethnic Minorities (NEKH)

The Office for National and Ethnic Minorities (NEKH) was one of the first new institutions established in 1990. Its mandate has been to assist in the development of government minority policies and to review and monitor the situation of minority communities. Its activities in supporting the Roma minority include financial support to a number of Roma organizations, such as the National Roma Information and Cultural Center, the network of Roma Minority Community Houses, as well as various Roma magazines, radio, and TV programs. Since the mid-1990s, NEKH has taken a leading role in developing and overseeing the implementation of the government's "Medium-Term Package" for Roma.

While there has been consensus about the necessity of NEKH's activities, concerns have

been raised about its ability to effectively perform its mandate, due to a perceived lack of authority and difficulty in coordinating across government agencies. In 2002 many of NEKH's responsibilities related to the social integration of Roma and coordination on sectoral policies were transferred to the new Roma Office. This change is intended to strengthen coordination and monitoring of Roma policies at the interministerial level. Responsibility for Roma culture and minority rights remain with NEKH.

Medium-Term Package

The first version of the Medium-Term Package was adopted in 1997 and was aimed at furthering the social integration of Roma in Hungary. It outlines measures to be undertaken in education, culture, employment, housing, health, antidiscrimination, and communications. Implementation efforts were to be coordinated by the Council for Gypsy Affairs, established in 1995 to harmonize the efforts of government ministries and other institutions in addressing Roma issues. A review in 1999 shifted the primary emphasis to education and culture, and replaced the Council for Gypsy Affairs with the Inter-Ministerial Committee for Gypsy Affairs.¹⁰ Implementation itself

is assigned to different government ministries and other bodies, in cooperation with the National Roma minority self-government. In 2000, budgetary resources allocated for the implementation of the Medium-Term Package amounted to around 4.86 billion forints (Kállai and Törzsök 2000).¹¹

The adoption of the Medium-Term Package was an important step in addressing the concerns of Roma in Hungary. However, its effectiveness to date has been limited (OSI 2001). Main critiques revolve around weak coordination across the government and a general lack of competence and authority, both of which significantly hamper implementation. This lack of coordination, combined with a lack of clarity, transparency, and financial resources has limited the package's effectiveness.

Parliamentary Commissioner for Ethnic and National Minorities

The Parliamentary Commissioner for Ethnic and National Minorities (Minorities Ombudsman) is an independent institution established to monitor the implementation of minority rights, to investigate complaints, and to pursue remediation for the infringements of the rights of national and ethnic minorities.¹² According to the Ombudsman's office, Roma have lodged the vast majority of complaints. Moreover, unlike other complaints, their concerns are disproportionately related to acts of discrimination (OSI 2001). The Ombudsman reports that prejudice and discrimination against Roma is widespread in areas such as law enforcement, employment, education, housing, and access to public and private institutions (Commission 2000). Further, the Ombudsman reported that approximately 48 percent of complaints submitted by Roma in 2000 were filed against local governments (OSI 2001).

The Minorities Act and the Role of Minority Self-Governments

The Minorities Act of 1993 expanded minority rights in Hungary and established Hungary's unique system of minority self-government (MSG), which allows minorities to form their own elected bodies to work in partnership with

both local and national governments. The Act guarantees all recognized minorities individual and collective rights. The Act explicitly established Roma as one of the thirteen recognized national and ethnic minorities in Hungary for the first time.

The National Minority Self-Government (NMSG) system for Roma and other minorities was established in 1995. Representatives and spokespersons of local MSGs vote for the NMSG.¹³ The first Roma NMSG was a coalition formed by the Lungo Drom Gypsy Association which won all 53 seats. The government is required to provide funding for NMSG headquarters, infrastructure, and operating costs.

The scope of authority and duties of the NMSG outlined in the Minorities Act fall into two general categories: independent decision making in specific areas¹⁴ and consultation and oversight on sectoral policies and administration (Walsh 2000). In this latter role, the NMSGs act as mediators between local MSGs and the government, and as consultants in the drafting of legislation that affects the minority at all levels of government. They are also expected to take part in the supervision of minority education. Despite these guidelines, the Roma NMSG and those of other minorities have been challenged by the lack of precedent and clarity on the nature of the relationships between the NMSGs and local MSGs, and their corresponding governmental authorities (Kováts 2001b).¹⁵ While the Roma NMSG had an important role in shaping the Medium-Term Package, and has undertaken a number of high profile initiatives, insufficient finances have also limited its capacity (Kováts 2001b).

Local MSGs are elected bodies at the local level. They do not have a vote in the majority local governments, but they can veto any local government decision over matters that may affect them, particularly those concerned with education, culture, local media, efforts to sustain cultural traditions, and the use of minority languages (Commission 2000; NEKH 2000). The first MSG elections were held in 1994–95, and resulted in a total of 738 MSGs, of which 477 were Roma. Following the second round of elections in 1998, the number of local and Roma MSGs nearly dou-

bled to 1,367 and 753, respectively (NEKH 2000). By June 30, 2000, there were 738 Roma local MSGs out of a total of 1339 local MSGs, compared with 271 German, 75 Croatian, and 75 Slovak.¹⁶

The MSG system has garnered international attention and has raised the profile of Roma issues, the status of Roma communities and their representatives, as well as those of other minority groups in Hungary. However, its effectiveness has been mixed. A national survey of 232 Roma political leaders in 1998 showed that some Roma MSGs had been more active in political and social areas within their communities than others (Schafft and Brown 2000).

Many Roma MSGs have been able to successfully initiate a variety of projects to the benefit of their communities. The same survey identified the frequency with which MSGs engaged in different kinds of development initiatives, as well as which of these were perceived to be most important (Table 5.3) (Schafft and Brown 2000). Over 75 percent indicated that their MSG was involved in the provision of social welfare, and just over 60 percent identified cultural and education programs. The provision of local media programming and entrepreneurial activities were less frequent. Agricultural support was cited as the most important activity, followed by social welfare programs and education/job training. Least important were opportunities for local media programming.

The survey suggests that some Roma MSGs do function as a valuable resource to their communities. It also found that the more successful MSGs with higher institutional capacity tended

to exhibit higher levels of social cohesion among Roma themselves. They successfully built relations between Roma and non-Roma based on norms of trust and cooperation and could create effective institutional linkages outside of the locality (Schafft and Brown 2000).

On the other hand, this study and others have identified a number of factors which limit the effectiveness of MSGs including their relatively narrow focus on "cultural" issues, financial constraints, limited capacities and influence, and their perceived lack of legitimacy. The following summarizes some of the main challenges.

DEPENDENCE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENTS FOR FINANCING. Minority self-governments receive a small amount of funding annually from the state budget, and are therefore required to seek funding from multiple sources, including county and local governments and outside bodies. The Minorities Act does not provide for any explicit financing to MSGs. The amount specified by the Budget Act for MSGs is allocated in equal proportions among municipal governments, irrespective of their size, or the size of the minority population in the area. These funding considerations have three important consequences. First, in practice, MSGs are increasingly dependent on local municipal governments for funding, which can compromise their independence. Second, financial constraints in many cases prevent MSGs from implementing even their short-term mandates, let alone meeting the expectations of the electorate (Kállai 2000). Third, funding uncertainties limit medium- and long-term strategic planning.

Table 5.3: Roma MSG Local Development Initiatives, 1998

Development Initiatives	Involvement (percent)	Cited Among "Most Important" MSG Activities (percent)
Social welfare programs	78.8	21.4
Cultural programs/festivals	61.1	18.1
Education/job training	60.7	30.2
Agricultural support	58.4	32.0
Local media programming	45.5	9.0
Economic enterprises/business start-ups	42.4	12.7

Sources: Schafft 1999; Schafft and Brown 2000.

LACK OF CAPACITY AND INFLUENCE. In addition to the general lack of financing, some of the most significant problems reported about the MSG system are related to their lack of capacity (Kállai 2000). For example, most MSGs do not have sufficient information about the various legal, tendering, lobbying and cooperating opportunities, and little of this information is readily available, even from the National Roma Self-Government. Second, minority representatives tend to lack political experience and professional training. These problems are compounded in the case of Roma MSGs, given the smaller pool of professionally trained, educated, and politically experienced Roma candidates.

LACK OF LEGITIMACY/REPRESENTATIVENESS. Roma MSGs are also criticized for being unrepresentative. One reason is that there is no requirement that representatives who are elected to the MSG need to be a member of that minority. While the Minorities Act addresses the difficult question of who is a minority, relying solely on self-identification implies a degree of flexibility that has caused difficulties, particularly in terms of minority representation (Kállai and Törzsök 2000). For example, in the 1998 round of local elections, a number of individuals were elected to MSGs, even though they did not belong to that minority. This happened in the town of Hajdúhadház, where two non-Roma were elected to the Roma MSG. The role of non-Roma in MSGs is controversial. On the one hand, a mix of Roma and non-Roma can facilitate cooperation, particularly with the local government. On the other, it can undermine the local Roma community's confidence in the MSG.

FOCUS ON CULTURAL ISSUES. As outlined in the 1993 Minorities Act, the most important task of MSGs is to build cultural autonomy for minorities. While this issue in all its forms—educational, linguistic, maintenance of traditions—is an important aspect of improving the status of Roma, it may not always be the most urgent issue for local Roma communities. More pressing are concerns related to the disproportionately high rates of unemployment and the mass

impoverishment of much of the Roma population—issues which are only indirectly addressed the current system.

PROJECT EXPERIENCE: AN OVERVIEW

This section overviews a selection of Roma projects initiated in Hungary during the first decade following transition, while the following section draws some general lessons. In the spring of 2000, the World Bank collaborated with a team of Hungarian researchers to compile a database of Roma projects in Hungary.¹⁷ At that time, no aggregate information was available on the types of projects which had been implemented, their size, coverage, geographic concentration or sectoral focus. Policymakers, the NGO community and others involved in the Roma issue had no information on which to base their project development and partnership.

The database aimed to review the landscape of Roma projects which had been implemented in Hungary between 1990 and 1999, and to provide a basis for an assessment of Roma policy in this period. The review focused on selected projects in the areas of employment, education, housing, and health, and was designed to create a resource which would be useful for policymakers, NGO officials, Roma leaders, and others involved in Roma projects. The inventory identified 1,396 projects with a total cost of 3.6 billion forints, implemented and financed by central and local governments, NGOs, and the private sector.

A broad definition of “Roma projects” was used. Some projects included in the inventory had both Roma and non-Roma beneficiaries, such as the social land project discussed later in this chapter. The aggregate data from the inventory illustrate a steady increase in project activity related to Roma during the 1990s, as well as in the amount of resources spent (Table 5.4).

The spike in expenditures in 1993 represents a grant of 215 million forints which was provided by the Soros Foundation for the establishment of the Gandhi secondary school for Roma in Pécs in southern Hungary. In 1996, the increase in expenditures represents the government's initiative to establish the Public Foundation for Roma (Box 5.1). Of this amount, approximately 30 per-

Table 5.4: Project Inventory, 1990–1999

Year	Number of projects	Total expenditures (HUF '000s)	% of Government expenditures
1990	1	150	0.00
1991	19	6,218	0.00
1992	29	70,657	0.00
1993*	47	413,726	0.02
1994	63	179,486	0.01
1995	116	279,332	0.01
1996	241	569,910	0.02
1997	288	555,877	0.02
1998	253	643,731	0.02
1999	339	922,240	0.02
Total	1,396	3,641,327	0.07

*The increase in resources in 1993 reflects the investment of the Soros Foundation in the Gandhi School.

Source: World Bank project database.

cent was allocated to income generating programs, 20 percent to small business development, and 15 percent to student scholarships.

A fund established in 1998 by the National Roma Self-Government and the central government to help local governments cofinance regional development programs through grants significantly increased the total resources allocated for Roma projects. The fund started with 100 million forints for the upgrading of local infrastructure. The first programs were launched in 1999 but as the flow of information from Regional Development Councils to the relevant government ministries is limited, only some of these projects were included in the project inventory.

Regional Distribution of Projects

The geographic distribution of projects across counties in Hungary reflects the ethnic diversity of the country. Table 5.5 illustrates the regional breakdown for all projects which could be mapped to a specific county.¹⁸ The regions with the largest shares of Roma, Northern Hungary, the North Great Plain, and Southern Danubia, have the greatest share of projects. These are also the regions which have consistently had the highest unemployment rates, indicating that project activity may also reflect greater need in those areas.

Per capita expenditures on projects vary significantly across regions but were the highest in

Table 5.5: Projects by Region, 1990–1999

County	% of total projects	% of total Roma*	Total expenditures (HUF '000s)	Per capita expenditures (HUF)
Budapest	4.5	8.2	93,590	2,472
Central Region	2.4	6.0	63,403	2,302
Western Danubia	3.5	5.0	111,096	4,803
Northern Danubia	2.1	5.5	22,799	905
Southern Danubia	16.5	14.2	784,492	11,993
Northern Hungary	34.3	27.9	865,739	6,722
North Great Plain	29.0	25.4	817,098	6,965
South Great Plain	7.7	8.0	205,703	5,571
Total	100	100	2,963,920	6,413

*1992 estimates by G. Kertesi and G. Kézdi.

Source: World Bank project database.

Box 5.1: Public Foundations in Hungary

There are two main types of NGOs in Hungary: associations and foundations.¹ In 1993, a separate, intermediate category of “public foundations,” unique to Hungary was created. These public foundations are established by the government to fulfill a specific public policy objective. While supported primarily through government financing, they are independent bodies, intended to be both “state” and “civic” in character.

The identification, development, and implementation of their goals are overseen by an advisory or trustee board, which can consist of members of government (national, county, or municipal), representatives of civil society, business interests, research and academic communities, as appropriate to the goals of the foundation. In some cases, a representative from a relevant ministry has a position on the board, and the ministry may provide additional direction and oversight. Public foundations are found in all sectors (e.g. education, health, labor, environment, arts and culture), and operate at the national, county and municipal levels. By 1995, there were 458 public foundations, or 3 percent of all foundations representing just over 1 percent of the total NGO sector (Jenkins 1999).

The Public Foundation for Hungarian Gypsies

In 1990, the Office for National and Ethnic Minorities (NEKH) was established to develop and oversee minority policy. In conjunction with this Office, two public foundations were established in 1995 to manage the government funds allocated to for improving the situation of Roma. In the same year, the Public Foundation for National and Ethnic Minorities was set up, primarily to promote the self-identity and to preserve the cultures of minority communities. Later in 1995, the Public Foundation for Hungarian Gypsies was established. This Foundation’s objectives are to promote social integration, mitigate unemployment, increase Roma school attendance, and protect civil rights. While by-laws do not exclude outside funding, to date financing has come almost exclusively from the state budget. Total government financing was 350 million forints for 2001 and 2002 combined. The majority of this funding is allocated to a scholarship program, enterprise promotion, and support for income-generating projects.

The Foundation also supports a wide variety of programs, including small business development and training of Roma officials in public administration. The Foundation works closely with government and civil society organizations with similar interests. Applications for funding can come from Roma minority self-governments (MSGs), communities, foundations, municipalities, and individuals.

The decision-making authority of the Foundation rests with a 21 member Board of Trustees which is responsible for the mandate of the Foundation, and for approving all applications for funding. The Public Foundation Office consists of ten employees, over half of whom are Roma. They assist the board, administer the projects and funds, and oversee the completion and processing of the applications. In addition, 5 independent external monitors help prepare applications, and monitor and evaluate projects.

Note:

1. These organizations are defined in the Hungarian Civil Code on Associations (Sections 61–64), and Foundations (Section 74). Both of these organizational forms existed under communism, subject to tight administrative control. Such controls were relaxed and independence from government supervision was instituted through the Law on Association (Law 1990/II, January 1989) and an amendment to the Civil Code (Law 1990/I, January 1990).

Source: Office of National and Ethnic Minorities, 2002.

Southern Danubia. This reflects higher spending in two counties—Baranya and Tolna. In Baranya, a significant amount was spent on the Gandhi School in Pécs. In Tolna 280 million forints were spent on infrastructure for utilities. In Zala County in Western Danubia and Jász-Nagykun-Szol-

nok County in the North Great Plain region, the situation is different, as a large number of Roma organizations have been involved in implementing projects.

Table 5.6: Distribution of Projects by Sector, 1990–1999

Sector	Number of projects	% of total projects	Total expenditures (HUF '000s)	% of total expenditures	Average project size (HUF '000s)
Education	200	14.3	1,024,233	28.1	5,121
Employment	1,121	80.2	2,174,272	59.7	1,940
Health	36	2.6	32,795	0.9	911
Housing	3	0.2	2,700	0.1	900
Community centers	9	0.6	11,877	0.3	1,320
Miscellaneous	29	2.1	395,451	10.9	13,636
Total	1,398	100	3,641,328	100	23,828

Source: World Bank project database.

Sectoral Distribution of Projects

There is a wide divergence in the level of activity (measured as percentage of total projects and percentage of total expenditures) in each of the sectors examined in the inventory. The highest levels of activity took place in education and employment, and the lowest levels in health and housing (Table 5.6).¹⁹ In education, 21 percent of the total expenditures represent the investment in the Gandhi school. The Soros Foundation's scholarship program also comprises a significant share of the resources allocated to the sector. During the

period covered by the inventory, 3 percent of projects were devoted to health issues and less than 1 percent to housing. Projects categorized as "miscellaneous" are multisectoral, generally addressing housing and employment issues, and are largely financed by the Regional Development Councils. Community development projects in Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén county (57 million forints) and the installation of gas pipes in Tolna county (280 million forints) comprise a large share of this category.

Table 5.7: Projects by Donors, 1990–1999

Donor	Number of projects	% of total projects	Total expenditures (HUF '000s)	% of total expenditures (%)
Private foundations				
Autonómia Foundation	474	34.0	274,409	7.5
Network for Democracy (DemNet)	4	0.3	8,379	0.2
Soros Foundation	52	3.7	824,902	22.7
Government financed				
Public Foundation for Modernizing				
Public Education	4	0.3	5,500	0.2
Ministries	318	22.8	1,364,313	37.5
National Foundation for				
Employment (OFA)	12	0.9	117,784	3.2
National Institution for Health				
Prevention (NEVI)	29	2.1	21,602	0.6
Office for National and				
Ethnic Minorities (NEKH)	37	2.6	63,891	1.8
Public Foundations	431	30.9	369,349	10.2
Regional Development Councils	34	2.4	586,615	16.1
Total	1,395	100	3,636,744	100

Source: World Bank project database.

Sources of Funding

Between 1990 and 1999, most projects were implemented with government financing (62 percent), although a significant portion (38 percent) were financed by private foundations (Table 5.7). Government ministries financed 23 percent of all projects, representing the largest percentage of total expenditures (38 percent).²⁰ Government sponsorship of projects also included public foundations (30 percent of all projects, and 10 percent of total expenditures), and the Regional Development Councils (with only 2 percent of all projects accounting for 16 percent of total expenditures). Public foundations supported 31 percent of all projects. Two private, nonprofit foundations, Autonomía and Soros accounted for 30 percent of the total expenditures for this period.

PROJECT CASE STUDIES

In addition to the project inventory, more in depth case studies, based on interviews with project administrators and beneficiaries, were undertaken by the Hungarian research team on a set of selected projects. As noted throughout this volume, there has been limited evaluation of Roma projects. While these assessments do not substitute for rigorous project evaluation mechanisms built in ex ante, they provide insight into issues and lessons. The case studies were designed to validate the information collected during the inventory, to see if projects included in the database were actually implemented on the ground. Based on that experience, general lessons can be drawn to inform future projects.

Case Study #1: Segregated Education in Hajdúhadház

The case of the education of Roma children in Hajdúhadház illustrates how poorly-designed incentives can undermine the objectives of a policy.²¹ In Hajdúhadház, as is the case throughout Hungary, local governments receive subsidies to support education for Roma children. However, as illustrated in this case, these subsidies work to reinforce segregation and compromise the quality of education for Roma students.

Hajdúhadház is a town of 13,000 in eastern Hungary. It is situated 12 miles from Debrecen,

the second largest city in the country. Approximately 2,400 residents are thought to be Roma, and the share of the Roma population in the town is growing rapidly. According to local estimates, about half of the children who registered for school during the past few years are Roma. The local economy has deteriorated since 1989. In 2000, the unemployment rate was estimated at 40 percent for the whole population, and 95 percent for Roma. According to local leaders, the large majority of educated residents leave the area for opportunities elsewhere. Local relations between Roma and non-Roma are generally characterized by segregation, hostility, and tension.

There is a high degree of segregation within the Hajdúhadház schools. The majority of Roma children attend separate remedial classes in the two primary schools in the town, the Földi János and Bocskai schools. They study separately from non-Roma children, with different teachers, textbooks, poorer conditions, and fewer resources than their peers. A 1999 report by the Debrecen public health service “strongly objected” to conditions in the Roma section of the Bocskai school. The classroom walls were rotting, the floor was unstable, toilets broken, and lighting insufficient. Since there was no gymnasium, physical education classes were held in the hallways and classrooms.

BRIDGING CLASSES. Both schools receive state subsidies for the education of Roma children. According to law, these resources are intended for remedial “bridging” classes and courses on Roma culture and education. Bridging classes are intended to overcome the educational disadvantages of Roma children—many of whom do not attend preschool—and to integrate them into the mainstream education system. In practice, these programs tend to perpetuate segregated education and are constrained by the lack of qualified staff and resources. In 1998, 67 percent of the Roma students in the Földi János school studied in segregated Roma classes.

Students in the bridging programs learn the same material as those in regular classes, but go through less material at a slower rate. As a result, while the aim may be to bring Roma students up

to standard levels, their chances of returning to mainstream classes are reduced each year that they stay in the bridging classes. In addition to the bridging classes, an estimated one-fourth of Roma students in Hajdúhadház study in special classes for the mentally disabled which are run by the Bocskai school. In 2000, 132 out of 156 students in the special education classes were Roma. It is very rare for children who attend these classes to continue their education at the secondary level.²²

In Hajdúhadház, students are placed in the bridging classes based on the evaluation of teachers and whether they have attended preschool. While preschool in Hungary lasts three years, only the final year is compulsory. As a result, Roma students are frequently placed in bridging classes, because they generally attend only one year of preschool. The principal of the Földi Janos school explained: "The only selection criteria [for bridging classes] is preschool education. To place someone in the normal class without complete preschool education would be similar to a competition between a Trabant and a Mercedes."

The educational subsidies are also earmarked to support the inclusion of Roma culture and history into the curriculum. While the intentions of this policy are positive, the schools and teachers were unprepared to provide this type of instruction. While more than half of the 160 teachers in Hajdúhadház teach Roma children, few have any training in multicultural education, or access to appropriate teaching materials. The principals of both schools also noted prejudices among their teachers. In 1992 the principal of the Földi school asked his colleagues to list the three best features of their school. The third most common answer was the segregation of Roma pupils into separate buildings. Some teachers also noted that they viewed having to teach bridging and special classes as punishment. Even when teachers have good intentions, their lack of background and understanding of Roma issues limit their effectiveness. In the Földi school, one of the teachers learned the Roma language, but teaches a dialect which is not spoken in the settlement.

The majority of Roma parents interviewed in both the Földi and Bocskai schools expressed dissatisfaction with the segregated schooling system

in Hajdúhadház. From the Földi school, thirteen families reported that they had protested against the poor school conditions and teaching quality, but their children were never admitted to the central building. Nearly 70 percent of Roma families who were interviewed indicated that they felt that their children should be allowed to study in mixed classes. Similar sentiments were expressed at the Bocskai school.

FINANCING SEPARATE EDUCATION. Hungary's system of intergovernmental transfers reinforces the separate education of Roma students. As the subsidies are earmarked for bridging and special classes, schools have a financial incentive to maintain these programs, regardless of their usefulness. Both schools have expanded their Roma sections. At the Földi school, a storeroom was recently converted into another Roma classroom.

While schools have an incentive to retain their subsidies, local governments use the provision of additional resources to the schools as an excuse to decrease their contributions to the schools' budgets. In other words, the local governments reduce their support to the schools in proportion to the amount of the subsidy. This squeezes the schools fiscally, as the bridging and special schools cost more than the regular classes. The principal of the Földi school estimated that the Roma program cost three times as much per student as the subsidy provided by the state.

There is little monitoring of the use of the subsidies. However, under pressure, the Ministry of Education undertook a national survey of their use in 2001. The Ministry, through a research center, contacted more than 900 mayors, of whom 370 did not respond. Those mayors who did respond acknowledged that there were no bridging classes in their schools, although they did receive the subsidies.

The challenges of addressing Roma education in Hajdúhadház are evident elsewhere in Hungary. Recent studies indicate that the implementation of "catch-up" classes in Hungary is widespread. As of 1995, catch-up programs were in 433 schools (Radó 1997). While initially envisaged as a temporary solution, in many cases bridging classes have resulted in long-term institutional segrega-

tion, in part due to inadequate facilities and quality of education in the segregated classes, and the growing resistance by teachers and parents in the mainstream schools to register Roma students at all. Analyses of catch-up programs have revealed that they are generally of low quality, sometimes existing “in name only”—not following the specified curriculum (Radó 1997; Havas et al. 2001). Further, in many areas exclusionary practices persist, including the continued practice of placing Roma in special schools for the disabled.

Case Study #2: Roma Employment Project in Bagamér

A common sentiment among policymakers and others interested in expanding opportunities for Roma in Hungary and in other countries is that agricultural programs can provide opportunities for self-sufficiency, particularly for Roma in rural areas. In reality there has been very little experience with agricultural programs, and even less evaluation of whether such projects yield their intended results, and mitigate rural Roma unemployment. The case of the horseradish project in Bagamér provides a glimpse of how such a project can play out in practice.²³

The village of Bagamér is situated near the Romanian border, 30 km from Debrecen. In 1999, it had a population of 2,580. There are 186 Roma families in Bagamér, or approximately one-third of the population. Between 1989 and 1992, the majority of Roma employed in state-owned enterprises lost their jobs. In 1999, 80 percent of the heads of Roma families were without legal and permanent work. Restructuring and unemployment affected the entire labor force. The agricultural cooperative in the area, which primarily employed non-Roma, was privatized. These developments led to the emergence of a number of private farms, which rely on more temporary, seasonal labor, rather than on permanent employees. This increased competition for employment and heightened ethnic tensions in the village.

Horseradish cultivation has a long tradition in Bagamér. The plant is processed for use in the food industry, and as an ingredient in some pharmaceuticals. Growing horseradish is labor-intensive, and requires expertise. During the

socialist period, some private farms alongside agricultural cooperatives specialized in cultivating horseradish. As a result, at the outset of the transition, a market existed with a network of producers who processed and sold the product on domestic and foreign markets. Although Roma participated in horseradish cultivation as seasonal workers, they were left out of the privatization process because they did not own land or were not members of the local cooperative. So they were not eligible to become landowners and independent horseradish farmers.

In 1996 Miklós Rózsás, an energetic and prominent member of the local Roma community and Chairman of the Local Association of Roma Leaders, and Sándor Zsákai, another leader of the same association, came up with the idea to help Roma become horseradish farmers. They tried to raise money and sent a proposal to the Autonomía Foundation and the Public Foundation for the Gypsies in Hungary. Their initiative was rejected at first, but in 1997 they received 1.5 million forints (about US\$7,000) from the Autonomía Foundation under the condition that half of the sum would be repaid to the Foundation after the harvest. After that they received support from the Foundation every year for their horseradish-growing program, and in 2000 and 2001 the total subsidy was provided as a grant.

During the first phase of the project, between 1997 and 1999, resources were requested for plowing, fertilizer, pesticides, spraying, irrigation, harvesting, and transportation. The Association also requested money for leasing land, while pledging that part of the profit would be spent on future land purchases. The funds from Autonomía were transferred in several installments, linked to progress in the project. The Association paid providers directly for services such as plowing, while other services were paid by the individual producers. The contract between Autonomía and the Association defined the upper limit of what could be paid to each household and for each phase of work, but the beneficiaries themselves could decide when to withdraw the money.

During this first phase of the project, all participating households but one repaid the loans after the harvest. In 2000 financing conditions changed

significantly. The project cycle was extended to two years from one, and the subsidy became a nonrefundable grant. From 2000 onwards the Autonomía Foundation focused its efforts on projects that could become self-sustaining over time. The aim was to support entrepreneurial initiatives and Roma who could become primary producers. The majority of the participants in the Bagmér project in 2000 and 2001 already owned land and were ready to continue farming.

A weakness of the Bagmér project is its small scale. While the nominal value of the financial support from Autonomía has essentially remained the same since 1997, the cost of cultivation has significantly increased, and that has deterred many households from participating in the program. In 2000 13 families were included in the program, down from 19 in 1997. Another criticism of the project was its lack of targeting and transparency in selecting beneficiaries. The Association's main concern was to repay the grant to Autonomía, therefore it sought families which were most likely to succeed in the project, and targeting based upon need was not a primary criteria. This practice has led to charges of elitism from some households left out of the project.

Despite these criticisms, the project remained viable. The project demonstrates that even given favorable market conditions, success requires a fortuitous combination of circumstances, including enthusiastic leadership, a profound knowledge of the production process, conducive envi-

ronmental conditions, and a donor which is ready to take risks.

Case Study #3: The Social Land Program in Zsadány

The case of Zsadány provides another example of an agricultural project.²⁴ Zsadány is a village in Békés County. Of its 1,882 inhabitants, between 100 to 150 are Roma. The village has been struck by widespread unemployment, agricultural crisis, and rural poverty. It has an exceptionally high rate of unemployment. Out of the 670 working-age inhabitants, 300 are registered as unemployed. Despite this, the population has been stable for many years, with amicable relations between Roma and the majority population. Roma in Zsadány are relatively well integrated into the larger community; they work and live together with non-Roma, and mixed marriages are not uncommon. Rather than succumbing to economic decline, the mayor and the local government have actively sought to rejuvenate the village, including applying successfully for public work programs from the central government, and initiating the social land program.

THE SOCIAL LAND PROGRAM. Since 1990, social land programs have been supported across Hungary, financed by relevant ministries, mostly by the Ministry of Health, Social and Family Affairs. The main objective of these programs is to alleviate rural poverty by providing financial assistance,

Table 5.8: Program and Activities Supported under the Social Land Program

Program types	Activities
1. Assistance in production and services (means-tested)	Use of land; leasing of land, seeds, machinery and chemicals; support for animal breeding.
2. Organization of production	Organization of production and marketing; assistance in processing, storing, and transportation of crops; securing tools.
3. Services	Technical assistance; training courses, events; community development; self-help groups; setting up organisations for more effective production.

Source: Ministry of Health, Social and Family Affairs of Hungary.

services, and support to poor households which lack the means and capacity to engage in small-scale farming or animal breeding projects (Table 5.8). Nearly 75 percent of the programs offer assistance in production and services and are aimed at increasing self-sufficiency and income levels. The program is open to Roma and non-Roma families, and is means-tested to reach the poorest households. Roma comprise 51 percent of the beneficiaries of the program throughout the country, while regionally the rates vary from 29 percent (Békés County) to 70 percent (Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok County).

THE PROGRAM IN ZSADÁNY. Organized by the local government, the social land program started in Zsadány in 1995. While the primary goal of the program is to improve the living conditions and prospects of the poor, other aims include stimulating community involvement in local development, providing public works, promoting inclusion of poor and excluded groups, and reducing prejudices against Roma and other vulnerable groups.

The Ministry of Health, Social and Family Affairs has supported the Zsadány initiative every year since 1995, with the exception of 1997, when the Autonómia Foundation filled the gap. The Public Foundation for Gypsies in Hungary also provided support. Ministry assistance resumed between 1998 and 2000. While the amount of financial support remained relatively stable, the content of the program has changed considerably over the years. The project initially focussed on growing tomatoes; however because of unfavorable environmental and market conditions, in 1998 cultivation shifted to corn and mixed vegetables, along with rabbit-breeding. Over the years, significant investments have been made into agricultural assets (machines and land).

Of the 40 families participating, as of 1999, 20 were Roma. The turnover of participants is relatively high, with only half continuing in the program for a second year. There are various reasons for this high turnover rate, including better employment opportunities elsewhere. As of 1999, only three persons were excluded from participating in the program.

By most accounts, the program is considered to be important in its attempts to address problems such as poverty, unemployment, and social exclusion. The profitability of the program is modest at best. According to the rough estimates of the local government in 1998, every forint of assistance generated an income of 1.3 forints. A benefit of the program is that the long-term unemployed become eligible for unemployment benefits after six months of participating in the program.

Given the kinds of environmental and market conditions that plague agricultural production generally, as well as local challenges related to the lack of arable land and the small scale of production, small projects supported under the social land program can rarely become sustainable. Nevertheless, the program has demonstrated adaptability and flexibility. Investments in assets have improved the efficiency and effectiveness of the program which contributed by providing relatively stable sources of legal income to beneficiaries, easing the poverty of rural families, and increasing community acceptance and inclusion of both Roma and non-Roma families.

Case Study #4: Is Nyíregyháza Building a "Roma Town"?

Between 1998 and 2000 the local government of Nyíregyháza worked hard to develop one of the largest Roma settlements in Hungary.²⁵ The city invested significant resources into the development of the settlement, named "Gusev," out of its own resources, as well as funds received from the central government and donors. City officials organized public works programs, developed the sewage system, replaced the water pipes, and opened a Roma community center. The results of these investments are significant. However, if the entire program is implemented, it will further separate Roma in Nyíregyháza from the rest of the population.

Nyíregyháza is located in Szabolcs county. It has two large Roma settlements: the Orosi street settlement which is located at the eastern gate of the city in a prosperous area, and the Gusev settlement, which is one of the largest Roma settlements in Hungary. Gusev is situated on the outskirts of

the city, separated from the majority population by a railway station, military barracks, and an industrial zone. The city's plans are to remove the Orosi settlement and rehabilitate the Gusev settlement to accommodate both populations.

The Orosi settlement was built in the 1960s as a temporary housing settlement. By the 1980s, urban sprawl around the impoverished settlement had grown substantially, prompting the municipality to demolish half of the houses, and relocate the families to Gusev. In the 1990s, pressures to remove the remainder of the settlement increased, prompted in part by increasing property values and dynamic development in the surrounding area, including several new shopping malls, and plans to build a foreign-funded exhibition center adjacent to the Roma settlement. According to a 1993 survey, there were approximately 510 Roma still living in the settlement.

In contrast, the Gusev settlement was created in the late nineteenth century and served as barracks of the Monarchy's cavalry regiment. In the 1950s, it was used to house Soviet officers, and later it became the residence area of the local party and administration elite. In the 1960s, the appeal of the settlement declined as more affluent families moved to new high-rise housing estates. By the 1970s, the settlement became a "penal colony" within the public housing system. Families in debt, evicted families, and many Roma who had moved into the city were provided with housing in Gusev. A survey conducted in the early 1990s indicated that there were around 830 registered residents living in Gusev. Current estimates place the population at over one thousand. Over the years, the infrastructure and reputation of the settlement have deteriorated and the population has become predominantly Roma.

In the 1990s, the city of Nyíregyháza undertook a wide range of urban development projects aimed at cleaning up the inner city, and fostering investments in industry and services. Investors interested in the development potential of the city have pressed for the removal of the Orosi street settlement. In response, the municipality agreed that Gusev be rehabilitated and more housing be built to accommodate new residents, including those from Orosi street. Moving the large number

of Orosi Roma into other neighborhoods in Nyíregyháza was deemed too politically risky.

In 1998, the local government established a corporation to oversee local housing development, including new housing and rehabilitation, the management of the meager public rental housing stock, collection of debts, and relocations. The city council approved 60 million forints for the program and received an additional grant of 25 million forints from the central government for public works. Staircases of the apartments were repainted, basements cleaned, and sidewalks constructed in the narrow streets. Water pipes were replaced throughout the settlement and water meters were installed in the single-room units. The Roma Community Hall was refurbished. Special programs for children, job clubs, art clubs, and various competitions were introduced to reduce the exclusion in the settlement and reinforce local trust in municipal institutions, programs, and resources. A wide range of further improvements are planned, including a homeless shelter, additional sewage, and the installation of district heating in all apartments.

Providing the Gusev settlement with improved living conditions and better access to services seems to be a move in the right direction. Yet, rehabilitation of the settlement, and the relocation of Roma families from Orosi, will further isolate the Roma population by increasing their geographic and educational segregation from the rest of the population in Nyíregyháza. Further, it ignores the strong potential for increased inter-ethnic tensions among Roma. The two Roma communities are opposed to the idea of living together. This has further heightened tensions within the Roma community and increased suspicion of the local government among Roma.

PROJECT EXPERIENCE: LESSONS LEARNED

Despite the diversity of the projects reviewed in the case studies, some general issues and conclusions emerged which have implications for future projects in Hungary and elsewhere

TRADEOFFS IN MANAGING PROJECT OBJECTIVES. The success of many projects depends on how project objectives are interpreted and managed. In many

cases, project objectives entail difficult tradeoffs and the negotiation of multiple—often conflicting—interests of donors, implementing organizations, beneficiaries, and majority communities.

TARGETING BENEFICIARIES. Beneficiary selection involves tradeoffs in objectives. For example, the Bagamér horseradish project selected participants based upon their capacity for success in farming, and did not necessarily seek the families in greatest need. This approach can be controversial, because of the high level of poverty among Roma communities. However, in the long run this approach may improve the welfare of the community. Targeting households with the greatest potential can help ensure that the project gets sufficiently established and that it can be expanded to those in greater need. However, perceptions of inequality, a lack of transparency, and increased ethnic tensions (through the inclusion of non-Roma families) may also jeopardize project objectives. In the Bagamér case, further information is needed to assess whether the households that did participate in the project benefited from the project, and whether they would have succeeded without project assistance.

RISKS OF DECENTRALIZATION. The Roma resettlement program in Nyíregyháza demonstrates some of the potential risks of decentralized projects which are overseen by local governments. In Hungary, housing policies and programs are determined exclusively at the local level. While this will allow projects to be tailored to local conditions, it raises the risk of their being “captured” by local interests if they are designed and implemented without incorporating the needs and concerns of local minority self-governments, other civil society groups, or Roma themselves. National monitoring and evaluation would allow for more inclusive criteria to be applied, and could help ensure that beneficiaries are included in decision-making processes, as well as in project implementation.

IMPROVED CONDITIONS: SEGREGATION OR INTEGRATION? The Nyíregyháza case study shows how the interpretation of project goals may serve

some—but not all—interests. Significant efforts have been made to improve the living conditions of the Gusev Roma settlement, yet in the long run, these efforts, and the relocation of Roma families from Orosi into this community, will exacerbate the social exclusion of Roma through explicit geographic and educational segregation. Alternative programs aimed at facilitating the greater integration of Roma and non-Roma communities were either not considered or were deemed politically too risky. These issues echo the challenges described in the previous chapter on Roma settlements in Slovakia. While it is urgent to improve living conditions in settlements, such investments are investments in the future separation of the settlements from the majority population.

Desegregation efforts in Hajdúhadház have come up against similar barriers. Both primary schools in the town have made significant efforts to improve the conditions for Roma students. However, both are concerned about becoming known as the local “gypsy-school” and risk losing the children of the local elite to the other school. There is intense competition between these two schools for resources, better students, and reputations. While it is in the interest of both schools to retain the state subsidies for special education classes, they have been reluctant to challenge the strong opposition to desegregation expressed by non-Roma parents and education officials.

ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND EXPERIENCE. A number of the case studies demonstrate the importance of linkages with established and respected organizations, as well as the benefits of capable and committed leadership. The experience and reputations of leaders and implementing organizations affect their abilities to secure support from donors and manage projects.

A key factor in the success of the Bagamér horseradish project was its leadership. The head of the Association is a charismatic leader who was formerly the head of the local minority self-government, and has had significant leadership experience in Roma civil society. He received training in project management and was effective in raising resources for the horseradish project

and other activities from a wide range of public and private sources. He is widely accepted by the community, and his staff observed that he “speaks the language of the donors.” In addition to funds from the Autonomia Foundation, the Association received resources from the Public Foundation for National and Ethnic Minorities in Hungary, the Soros Foundation, the Ministries of Youth and Sports, and Social and Family Affairs and PHARE. Over time, the experience and credibility of the Association have grown, in part due to the personality of its leader, as well as the Association’s involvement in a number of other community programs in social welfare, education, health promotion, and crime prevention.

The dominance of personality in project leadership also has its risks. The Bagamér case illustrates that while a strong leader can motivate and move a project forward, such leadership can also limit transparency if the leader relies on inside connections and networks in securing resources and selecting project participants and staff. In Bagamér this has led to resentment and tensions within the community.

Leadership also played an important role in the Zsadány case. The local government, headed by the mayor Árpád Dudás, has worked hard to secure a variety of public works programs, as well as the social land program, for reducing rural poverty. Dudás is widely perceived as the engine of the social land program. His combination of relevant experience and commitment has contributed to the relative success of the program, the ongoing support of the Ministry of Social and Family Affairs,²⁶ and general social cohesion between Roma and non-Roma participants.

LOCAL ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT. The broader economic context within which projects are undertaken also has important implications for project success. For example, the horseradish project in Bagamér was able to draw on existing resources—a previously developed network and market, cultivation experience, and expertise of workers—which contributed to its relative success. However, agricultural projects tend to be particularly vulnerable to outside shocks, and as a result may be more risky than other initiatives.

In Bagamér, the collapse of the market in 1998 created significant difficulties for many producers in the area. Agricultural crises and market vagaries also significantly affected the profitability and self-sufficiency of the social land programs in Zsadány. In neither case would the projects have survived without significant outside support.

LACK OF MONITORING AND EVALUATION. Finally, most of these projects highlight the need for clear guidelines and rigorous monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. Programs financed from budgetary and private sources are not coordinated and often appear to be randomly selected. The majority of projects have no mechanisms for monitoring or evaluation. The Public Foundation for the Gypsies in Hungary has been the only public sponsor to set up a monitoring system in addition to strictly collecting loan installments. The Autonomia Foundation is the only non-governmental sponsor that regularly monitors its programs. While Autonomia’s monitors are prohibited from giving advice or practical assistance to beneficiaries, they follow the progress of the projects to completion, and have at least one clear criterion for success, namely the proportion of loans repaid. In most other cases, supervision of the programs and the utilization of funds is at best, irregular. These issues are discussed further in the final chapter.

CONCLUSIONS

The proliferation of Roma policies and projects in Hungary is impressive. The government has made significant strides in creating and establishing the institutional framework for the protection of minorities generally, and Roma in particular. This includes the establishment of the Minority Self-Government system, a Hungarian initiative unique in Europe. These efforts have been supported and supplemented by a large and growing amount of project activity undertaken by a wide variety of community-based organizations. Nevertheless, barriers remain to the more effective functioning of this growing network of governmental and nongovernmental entities.

Responsibility for policy development on Roma issues, coordination, and implementation

have been distributed among a number of government bodies, leading to challenges in transparency, accountability, and coordination. For example, the implementation of the Medium-Term Package for the integration of Roma has been hampered by a lack of clarity over institutional mandates, ongoing difficulties in coordination across government agencies, as well as insufficient funding for all of the programs included. Further, while many general policies aimed at assisting marginalized and minority groups do benefit Roma, much of Roma policy itself remains poorly integrated into broader social policy in Hungary. Finally, because of the high degree of decentralization in Hungary, significant challenges remain in translating national policy into local implementation, in large part due to a lack of effective monitoring, evaluation, and enforcement.

The Minority Self Government (MSG) system has had mixed results. It has helped to raise the profile of Roma issues in Hungary and has increased access to national and local policymaking in areas concerned with minority education and culture. Moreover, many Roma MSGs have become active politically and socially in important ways within their communities. Despite this, the capacities of both the national and local Roma MSGs have been limited by a combination of insufficient finances, weak political competencies and influence, and a general lack of authority and legitimacy. Some observers cite their relatively limited mandate to “cultural issues” as insufficient in addressing the real needs and concerns of Roma communities.

Despite these challenges, the substantial policy and project experience in Hungary provides a rich foundation from which considerable learning and lessons have been derived. Efforts to improve monitoring and evaluation will further enhance the ability to translate this learning into policy and project development and implementation better able to meet Roma needs and facilitate integration. To these ends, the Hungarian government remains committed to improving and expanding its efforts as indicated by its plans for the future adoption of a long-term strategy for the integration of Roma, accompanied by comprehensive antidiscrimination legislation.

NOTES

1. See <http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/hungary>.

2. The ten EU candidate states in this category are: Cyprus, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, the Slovak Republic, the Czech Republic, and Slovenia.

3. See <http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/hungary>.

4. More recently, it has been estimated that there are some 50,000 registered NGOs in Hungary (<http://www.autonomia.hu/english/indexen.html>).

5. For a list of Roma and other NGOs dealing with issues related to sustainable development and advocacy, see the Non-Profit Information and Training Center <http://www.niok.hu/indexe.htm>.

6. The other recognized minorities are: Armenians, Bulgarians, Croats, Germans, Greeks, Poles, Romanians, Ruthenians, Serbs, Slovaks, Slovenes and Ukrainians (PER 1998).

7. As this chapter was prepared as the Roma Office was being set up, it focuses on the previous structure.

8. See the “Summary of measures taken by the Government affecting the Roma minority over the past two years”, http://www.meh.hu/nekh/Angol/roma_summary.htm.

9. In 1994 the Gandhi Foundation—a joint government and private initiative—established a high school and dormitory, the Gandhi Gymnasium, at Pécs, primarily aimed at educating talented Roma youth. The school is managed by the Foundation but financed through the Ministry of Education.

10. The new Inter-Ministerial Committee for Gypsy Affairs as the new coordinating body for the Medium-Term Package was given greater power to appoint subcommittees. In addition, it provides greater consultative access to Roma social organizations who, by invitation, may attend up to four of the Committee’s sessions per year. The Parliamentary Commissioner for Minority Rights and the Director of the Gandhi Foundation have standing invitations to all Committee deliberations (Kállai and Törzsök 2000).

11. See also the “Summary of measures taken by the Government affecting the Roma minority

over the past two years," http://www.meh.hu/nekh/Angol/roma_summary.htm.

12. See the Minorities Ombudsman home page at <http://www.obh.hu/nekh/en/index.htm>.

13. Concerns about the accountability of NMSG representatives have been raised due to the lack of formal mechanisms and the electoral college style of representation by which neither members of the minority, or the general Hungarian population have any direct say in the composition of the NMSG (Kováts 2001b).

14. According to Article 27 of the Minorities Act of 1993, by law, the NMSG independently may take responsibility for the establishment and maintenance of institutions to support the development of national identity and culture including a theater, museums, an institute for the arts/sciences, and a minority library. They also may take responsibility for the maintenance of secondary and higher educational institutions with country-wide coverage, and the establishment of legal advisory services.

15. For example, the first Roma NMSG set up its own form of intermediary representation (23 regional offices as of 1997) from its own resources in order to facilitate the link between the NMSG and the 477 Roma MSGs. Research from 1998 indicated that these actions were of mixed success, in part due to the unofficial status of these offices (Kováts 2001b).

16. See www.meh.hu/nekh/Angol/data2_2000.htm

17. The team was led by János Zolnay, and included: Gábor Bernáth, Angéla Kóczé, József Kolompár, Katalin Kovács, and Zsolt Zádori.

18. Of the total projects in the inventory, 93 percent could be mapped.

19. Housing expenditures do not include subsidies for home construction.

20. These figures are considered to be under-representative of the total activity of ministries on Roma projects; however, more detailed and comprehensive information on these projects was difficult to obtain.

21. Drawn from original case study by Gábor Bernáth (2000).

22. Throughout Hungary, a disproportionate number of students are designated as mentally disabled. According to a 1996 OECD report, 35 children in one thousand were labeled mentally disabled. This was in comparison with two in Turkey, four in Finland and nine in Italy. In the small villages in Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén County, Roma students are automatically sent to special classes for the disabled. This has been the practice for years. Ninety percent of Roma students in that county attend special classes.

23. Drawn from an original case study by Zsolt Zádori (2000).

24. Drawn from an original case study by Zsolt Zádori (2000).

25. Drawn from an original case study by János Zolnay (2000).

26. The Ministry has supported the Zsadány initiative every year since 1995 except for 1997 when, for reportedly politically motivated reasons, the subsidy was halted. In 1997, the Autonómia Foundation stepped in with financing of 1.7 million forints, which allowed the agricultural initiative to continue. Ministry financial aid was resumed again for 1998, 1999, and 2000.

Chapter Six: ROMA IN SPAIN

The situation of Roma in Spain provides a useful counterpoint to the analysis of Roma in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe discussed so far, with both important similarities and differences. Sizable Roma communities live in many of the existing member countries of the European Union, but the largest population lives in Spain. Thus, Spain has a wide range of project experience, both positive and negative, to draw upon. This chapter explores these policy approaches in order to place developments in Central and Eastern Europe in an emerging European context.

To frame this discussion, it is important to recognize some significant differences in the experience of Roma on both halves of the European continent. Exclusion from the labor market and economic opportunities have been a long-term phenomenon for many Roma in Western Europe. In contrast, Roma in Central and Eastern Europe had jobs during the socialist period. As a result, many have high expectations that the government will step in to provide jobs and services. This sentiment lies behind much of the frustration expressed by Roma in Central and Eastern Europe.

Levels of integration and relations with non-Roma also differ between Western and Central and Eastern Europe. Socialism required a large, settled labor force without a high level of skills or education. Assimilation efforts thus focused on erasing specific national, ethnic, and cultural identities, while drawing Roma into the formal labor force. In contrast, in Western Europe, with its more diversified labor markets, the integration process has generally been less systematic and sustained. Without the concerted employment campaigns associated with socialist industrialization, many Roma in Western Europe have main-

tained traditional niche occupations as craftsmen, traders, or seasonal farm laborers. Similarly, although most Roma in Western Europe are settled, there are more nomadic Roma in Western Europe than in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe.

Roma in Western Europe have also not experienced the widespread upheaval in their economic circumstances brought about by transition in the East. The economic conditions for Roma in Western Europe, including access to social services and employment opportunities, have been relatively stable. At the same time, rising xenophobia and anti-immigration sentiments are causes for concern across Europe. While the majority of Roma are not immigrants or foreigners in the countries where they live, they are often considered as such and bear the brunt of prejudice and discrimination. An overview of Roma living conditions and policies in Spain provides insight into the conditions for addressing Roma poverty in an expanding Europe.

ROMA IN SPAIN: A WESTERN EUROPEAN EXAMPLE

Spanish Roma face many similar issues to their eastern counterparts, particularly in access to opportunities on the labor market and education, housing, and living conditions. Because of Spain's higher level of economic development, levels of poverty and social exclusion among Spanish Roma (*gitanos*) are relatively lower than those faced by many in Central and Eastern Europe. Nevertheless, Roma in Spain have had a long and tumultuous history, and currently face many of the same challenges, if to a lesser degree, as Roma in Central and Eastern Europe in terms of social exclusion, poverty, and discrimination (Box 6.1).

Box 6.1: The History of Roma in Spain

Little is known about the origins of the Spanish Roma, due to their early migrations and the absence of a written history. The historical experience of Roma in Spain is marked by five distinct periods in the evolution of Spanish government policy.¹

Until 1499: Acceptance

The first Roma to reach Spain are thought to have arrived between 1415 and 1425. Between their arrival and 1499, Roma were generally accepted by the Spanish population. They were thought to be Christian pilgrims and were valued for their trades and skills.

1499–1633: Expulsion

Persecution of Roma began with the reign of Ferdinand and Isabella of Aragon and Castile in the late 1400s with their efforts to create a homogeneous Catholic state. Ethnic and religious minorities, including Roma, were ordered to either assimilate or leave the country. Non-integrated Roma were branded as highway robbers, thieves, and sorcerers. Although faced with the prospect of expulsion and the loss of their language, many Roma decided to stay in Spain, while at the same time attempting to preserve their traditional way of life.

1633–1783: Forced Assimilation

With the economic growth in Spain of the early 1600s, policies toward Roma shifted from expulsion to forced assimilation. Various laws were passed in an attempt to end the nomadic lifestyle of Roma, and settle them. The government hoped that Roma would simply seek formal employment and assimilate into the larger population. Again, however, Roma overwhelmingly managed to maintain their traditional way of life outside of mainstream society.

1783–1939: Incorporation and Legal Equity

Following the late 1700s, Spanish Roma experienced a period of formal legal parity, accompanied by considerable discrimination and exclusion in practice. In 1783, Charles III signed a decree which formalized legal equality between Roma and non-Roma citizens. The establishment of anti-Roma laws after that date was forbidden, and Roma were not to be singled out as a distinct ethnic group in official texts.²

These actions were followed by a period of relative incorporation, when further attempts were made by the government to extend the rights of Roma and to reduce anti-Roma sentiments. For example, the Constitution of 1812 stressed the recognition of legal equality for the Roma, granting Roma the full rights and responsibilities of citizenship. At the same time, the government gave little attention to improving their social and economic status within Spain. During this period, there were no government initiatives to assist the Roma.

1939–present: From Dictatorship to Democracy

These general trends continued through the Spanish Civil War and the onset of the Franco dictatorship in 1939. Under Franco, Roma were openly discriminated against and prohibited from speaking *cálo* in public. The Spanish National Guard classified Roma as a “dangerous group of people” to be dealt with cautiously.

After Franco’s death in 1975, King Juan Carlos assumed the throne and began the democratic transition. This marked a shift in government policy toward addressing Roma issues more openly. The transition was a time of general change and re-incorporation in Spain, with an emphasis on democratic and human rights for all Spanish citizens. Article 14 of the Constitution guarantees equality and full citizenship, and prohibits discrimination on grounds of racial origin, religion, or gender. Formally, the post-1978 policy was one of “assisting in the development of the Gypsy people and the recognition of the fact that the Gypsies have their own culture”(Gamella 1996).

Notes:

1. Unless otherwise noted, the historical background is drawn from Gamella (1996), Martín (2000).

2. This law has made the collection of data on the Roma population extremely difficult, as the 1783 action strongly discouraged the distinction of the Roma community in data collection and lawmaking. However, the collection of data based purely on ethnicity was technically not made illegal until the Constitution of 1978. Dependence from government supervision was instituted through the Law on Association (Law 1990/II, January 1989) and an amendment to the Civil Code (Law 1990/I, January 1990).

The most recent government estimate of the number of Roma in Spain, from 1999, is just over 630,000. However, as the Spanish Constitution of 1978 prohibits the collection of data on the basis of ethnicity, these numbers are disputed. Government officials, NGOs, and academics generally agree that the population ranges between 400,000 and 600,000.¹ Spain thus has the largest population of Roma in Western Europe, close to the population in Hungary. Following Spain, the largest populations of Roma in Western Europe are in Greece, Italy, France, the United Kingdom, and Germany (Table 6.1).

The majority of Roma in Spain speak Spanish, however, a significant number speak the Roma language, *caló*.² It is not known how many Roma speak *caló*, although estimates range widely between 40,000 to 140,000.³ The primary distinction between groups of Roma is made between Spanish and Portuguese Roma. Portuguese Roma mostly reside in the western part of the country, and speak a slightly different dialect of *caló*.

The National Program for the Development of Roma

The situation for Spanish Roma has changed substantially in the post-Franco era. Significant gains have been achieved through the overall improvement in economic conditions throughout Spain. These developments have had a significant positive impact on the advancement of Roma, through improved access to public housing, education, health services, and social assistance (ASGG 2001).

In 1988, the government began the implementation of the National Program for the Development of Roma (NPDR), which marked an important turning point in recognizing the exclusion of Roma and formulating policy strategies (Villareal 2001). The main goals of the NPDR are to improve the quality of life for Roma, foster equal opportunities, promote the inclusion of Roma in Spanish society, and improve relations between Roma and non-Roma. Despite significant improvements and government policy efforts, the exclusion and poverty of Roma in Spain persist in

Table 6.1: Roma Population Estimates, Selected Western European Countries

	Government Estimate ¹	Council of Europe Estimate ²	Minority Rights Group Estimate ³
Austria	—	20,000–25,000	20,000–25,000
Finland	10,000 (1998)	10,000	7,000–9,000
France	—	—	280,000–340,000
Germany	50,000–70,000 (1996)	70,000	100,000–130,000
Greece	150,000–300,000 ⁴	80,000–150,000	160,000–200,000
Italy	130,000	120,000	90,000–110,000
Portugal	40,000 (1997)	—	40,000–50,000
Spain	630,000 (1999)⁵	—	700,000–800,000
Sweden	20,000(1996)	40,000–50,000	15,000–20,000
Switzerland	—	35,000	30,000–35,000
United Kingdom	90,000	300,000	90,000–120,000

— Not available.

Sources:

1. Estimates submitted to the UN Committee on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination (except Greece, Italy, Spain and the United Kingdom); see <http://errc.org/publications/factsheets/numbers>.

2. Council of Europe, 2002 (Questionnaire on the Legal Situation of Roma/Gypsies/Travellers in Europe), <http://assembly.coe.int/documents/workingdocs/doc02/EDOC9397.htm>

3. Liegeois and Gheorghe (1995).

4. In 1997, the General Secretariat for Adult Education estimated the number of Roma in Greece to be between 150,000 to 200,000; the year before they were estimated at around 300,000.

5. Estimate by a Subcommittee of the Spanish Parliament (1999). In 1995, the government estimate submitted to the UN Committee on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination was between 325,000 and 400,000.

many areas, suggesting that continued and specific actions are still needed to further improve their welfare.

The NPDR was endowed with an annual budget of around 500 million pesetas (approximately US\$4 million), with matching funds promised from regional and local governments. Since 1989, roughly one billion pesetas (US\$8 million) have been spent annually on projects targeted at Roma. Additionally, starting in 1989, 0.52 percent of the net personal income tax collected has been allocated to supporting the Catholic Church and various NGOs.⁴ This program has channeled an additional 200 to 500 million pesetas to NGOs which work with the Roma community.

A central administrative body, the Roma Development Program Service Unit, was established to support and coordinate the NPDR within the public administration, and to provide technical and financial assistance to NGOs. This assistance includes facilitating participation of Roma in official institutions, organizing training programs for professionals working with Roma, and promoting greater awareness about Roma.

Further coordination of the program is carried out by three commissions: the Follow-up Com-

mission responsible for program oversight,⁵ the Inter-Ministerial Working Group responsible for coordinating sectoral initiatives among government ministries; and the Consultative Commission, comprised of Roma and non-Roma representatives,⁶ whose aim is to ensure cooperation between government and NGOs in the implementation of the NPDR and to represent the main issues affecting Roma to the other commissions.

Responsibility for implementing the program rests at the regional level. Projects are chosen by regional governments (Box 6.2). Once chosen, they are submitted to the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs at the federal level, where they must fulfill certain requirements to be considered for funding. Decisions on the selection of projects and funding are made jointly by both federal and regional governments. National funding must be cofinanced by regional and local authorities which are required to contribute at least 40 percent of the total project cost (Villareal 2001).

Project Activity

According to the annual report of the Service Unit of the NPDR, an average of 100 projects

Box 6.2: The Andalusian Plan for the Roma Community

Approximately 43 percent of Roma in Spain live in Andalusia. The region of Andalusia has made additional efforts to improve the living conditions of Roma. In 1996 the Andalusian Government approved a "Comprehensive Plan for the Gypsy Community," which became operational in 1997. The primary task of the Plan is to coordinate activities concerning Roma.

This function is considered particularly important because of the large number of programs and projects implemented in the region. Andalusia receives the largest share of money from the National Program for Roma Development (almost half of the total budget). Andalusia is also the largest beneficiary of the European Social Fund, because of its relatively lower levels of development than other regions in the country. The majority of initiatives targeted at Roma in Andalusia are small scale and highly localized. The programs are financed by a combination of:

- Transfers to the NPDR from the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (in 1997, close to 220 million pesetas, or 60 percent of estimated project costs) plus matching funds from the Andalusian government for 40 percent of total project costs;
- Transfers from the 0.52 percent personal income tax for non-profit organizations and/or associations, the majority of which go to the Federacion de Asociaciones Romanies Andaluzas.
- Contributions from various European Social Fund programs. While these programs are open to the broader community, in some cases 80 to 90 percent of the participants are Roma.

Source: Martín 2000.

have been implemented annually since 1995, with a peak of 120 projects in 1998. Of the more than 500 employees responsible for the implementation of the projects each year, approximately 22 percent are Roma. There are an estimated 50,000 direct beneficiaries per year, or approximately 12,000 families.

There is considerable diversity in the kinds of projects being implemented.⁷ The majority are carried out in the fields of education (including prevention of school absenteeism, extracurricular activities, and adult education), social assistance, housing (including renovations and resettlement support), health education (including courses for young mothers and drug abuse prevention programs), and vocational training courses. A few projects have focused on cultural activities, including Roma language classes or cultural exhibitions.

In addition to sectoral projects, in 1992 the NPDR Unit began sensitivity training programs for regional and local civil servants, aimed at improving the ability of regional and local administrators to address Roma issues. Diversity awareness has also been promoted through infrequent roundtables bringing together Roma representatives and civil servants. The NPDR Unit also lodges frequent complaints against negative portrayals of Roma in the media.

For Spain's Roma population, the NPDR marked a significant milestone because it represented the first time the national government officially recognized the specific issues faced by Roma and established concrete, nationwide measures to address them. The NPDR exhibits a number of strengths and weaknesses.

Strengths

CENTRALIZED CONTACT POINT. The NPDR Unit provides an important contact point for organizations, individuals, policymakers, and members of Parliament working in the field of Roma issues. The Unit provides a focal point for information sharing, and facilitates meeting a wide range of interests over program goals, project, and implementation strategies.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT INVOLVEMENT. For all NPDR interventions, central government funds must be cofinanced by regional autonomous communities or local administrations. National authorities coordinate, finance, and carry out followup activities, but the allocation of resources and project implementation are done by regional and local governments. This decentralized system has helped to place the Roma issue on the agenda of regional and local governments.

ROMA INVOLVEMENT. Another strength of the NPDR is its emphasis on fostering Roma participation. This is achieved in two ways. First, where possible, the NPDR recruits Roma personnel to work on the projects, and to participate in the training and development of Roma mediators, teachers, and social workers. Second, a portion of the funds have been spent on supporting Roma associations, which have played an active and important role in project implementation.⁸

FOCUS ON ACCESS TO SOCIAL SERVICES. In the 1980s, social welfare services became universally available to all citizens of Spain, including access to education, health, general social services, and specialized social services (e.g. for disadvantaged children, and the elderly). The Program works to integrate Roma more effectively into these mainstream social service and social assistance networks through outreach and specialized programs. For example, in Andalusia, children's vaccination and family planning programs for Roma are part of the mainstream public programs.

Weaknesses

WEAK LEGISLATIVE STATUS. There are also a number of ongoing concerns related to the ability of the NPDR to effectively carry out its mandate. One concern is that the NPDR does not enjoy the status of a legislated plan. While the NPDR was initially introduced as a bill to Parliament, it was never passed. This lesser status may threaten the long-term financial sustainability of the NPDR.

LACK OF MONITORING AND EVALUATION. A significant concern is the lack of systematic monitoring and

evaluation of projects and programs. In the majority of cases, the only documentation available are expenditures, or the project implementer's own subjective evaluations of the project's success or failure to meet its expected objectives.

A Spanish NGO to Watch: the Fundación Secretariado General Gitano

The case of the Fundación Secretariado General Gitano (FSGG)^{9,10} provides a useful example of the type of project activity which has resulted from NPDR financing. The FSGG is the largest and most prominent Spanish NGO working toward the advancement and integration of Roma. It is an example of a strong NGO with experience working with the Roma community which has successfully promoted the development of collaborative relationships with a range of government, private, and international entities.

The organization began operating during the mid-1960s, but did not become a legal entity until 1982. In keeping with its emphasis on intercultur-

al collaboration, the FSGG is governed by a Board of Trustees, half of whom are Roma. In 2001, roughly 40 percent of the 647 members of the total staff were Roma; and 67 percent of the total were women.¹¹ The activities of the FSGG have been growing steadily over the last 38 years, with significant expansion in the last couple of years. Between 2000 and 2001, the number of projects increased from 30 to 38. Over this same time period, the number of direct beneficiaries grew from 29,000 to 64,000, with a corresponding increase in financing for projects from around 4.6 million to 8.4 million Euro.

The majority of financing for the FSGG comes from the Spanish central government (roughly 36 percent) and European sources (approximately 27 percent) and in particular, the European Social Fund (see Box 6.3 on the Acceder Project). Significant financial support also comes from Autonomous Community and local governments (around 36 percent). In recent years, the FSGG has pursued more collaborative initiatives,

Box 6.3: The Acceder Program: Training and Employment Services

The Acceder program began in 1998 as a two-year pilot project in Madrid, and has subsequently expanded to a national program (ASGG 2000; ASGG 2001). The national program is currently being implemented throughout the principal municipalities in Spain (a total of 34) in 13 different Autonomous Regions. The program is administered by the ASGG, a national, non-profit organization working for the advancement of Roma, which receives financial support from the National Program for the Development of Roma, via personal income tax contributions.

The main objectives of the program are to: (i) provide Roma with professional qualifications and access to work contacts by addressing their needs and those of employers; (ii) increase the accessibility of general vocational training and employment services to unemployed Roma; and (iii) raise awareness of discrimination against Roma and work to improve society's view of the community.

The program provides individualized support to participants in identifying and preparing for employment. While the program is open to all interested applicants, 79 percent were Roma in 1999. Roma mediators work closely with job-seekers and employers to identify their skills, training needs, and employment opportunities. The mediators provide support to applicants throughout the training and job search process.

In 1999 there were 304 active job seekers enrolled in Acceder and 63 percent found employment. However, the job retention rate is not known, and cost-benefit analysis of the program is not available. Staff of the Asociación and participants noted that the strengths of the program are its individualized approach in assessing and matching skills and jobs and the use of mediators who can bridge the gap between gitanos and non-Roma. Challenges include the difficulty of providing adequate and appropriate training for individuals with low education levels, persistent discrimination on the labor market, and work incentives. Participants may be reluctant to accept low paying jobs and risk losing access to social assistance benefits.

Sources: ASGG 2000; 2001; Martín 2000.

including cofinancing, with close to 60 public and private organizations.

The FSGG is engaged in a wide variety of initiatives in vocational training and employment, education, health, youth, women, and regionally based social interventions (integrated action programs). In general, nearly half of the budget goes to employment programs, nearly 20 percent to education initiatives, and just under 12 percent to health, youth, and women's programs. The most prominent initiative to improve Roma inclusion into the labor market is FSGG's involvement in the Acceder Project (Box 6.3).

EDUCATION. Among the education programs that FSGG has initiated are a series related to educational mainstreaming, focused on improving Roma access and integration into the compulsory education system, reducing absenteeism, improving performance, and encouraging positive relations between Roma and non-Roma (Box 6.4). Extracurricular activities are also offered, as well as economic and tutorial support for Roma students interested in university education. The FSGG supports a variety of training programs, including teacher training, and vocational training for the socially disadvantaged.

HEALTH. To promote the improvement of Roma health, the FSGG works to improve Roma access to health services through mediation and information services. Projects have also been implemented which offer technical assistance to organizations on specific Roma health issues, including HIV/AIDS prevention. Additional actions have focused on the prevention of drug abuse among Roma youth, and public drug-abuse health services. The FSGG supports the European Community funded project entitled "Health and the Roma Community."

WOMEN. In partnership with eight Roma associations, the FSGG has a number of programs focused on advancement and support for the development of Roma women, focusing on health education, literacy, and integration into the labor market.

COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS. One of the most important features and strengths of the FSGG is its active

coordination with other NGOs and local governments. For example, the FSGG has developed three territorially-based, integrated programs through agreements with the governments of Madrid, Aranjuez, and Castilla. Also, under the auspices of the Acceder Program, the FSGG has been active in joint efforts with 13 autonomous communities. The organization also has worked closely with the European Commission on a series of multicultural pilot projects focusing on integration (identifying good practices in combating discrimination against Roma) and identifying measures to combat social exclusion. In 1999, FSGG (then ASGG) started working in several Central and Eastern European countries, and has technical assistance in the Czech and Slovak Republics and Hungary.

LIVING CONDITIONS OF SPANISH ROMA

While Roma live throughout Spain, they are geographically concentrated in four regions, or "autonomous communities," of the country (Table 6.2). Almost half of the total Roma population (43 percent), are found in the Southern province of Andalusia. Madrid has the second highest concentration of Roma with nearly 10 percent, followed by Catalonia and Valencia at close to 9 percent each.

Despite perceptions to the contrary, Spanish Roma generally live in permanently settled communities. In some autonomous communities, 87 percent of Roma have lived in the same municipalities for 15 years or more (Gamella 1996). Nevertheless, for many, the concept of mobility is still an important element of social organization and culture (Gamella 1996). There also has been a trend toward greater urbanization. Many Roma have moved from rural to urban areas in recent decades (Fresno 1994).

Roma in Spain share a similar demographic profile to that of Roma in Central and Eastern Europe. Historically, birth rates among Roma are higher than for the majority population. Over the past five centuries, the population has grown to over 30 times its original size. In comparison, over the same period the Spanish population increased 10 times from 4 million to 40 million.

The Roma population is much younger than the majority population. Approximately 40–50

Box 6.4: The School Monitoring Program, Municipality of Madrid

The School Monitoring Program¹ began in three districts in the Municipality of Madrid as a part of a collaborative Plan of Action, launched in January 1999, by the Madrid City Council and the Asociación Secretariado General Gitano (ASGG, now FSGG) (see Box 6.3).² The general aim of the Program is to facilitate the integration of Roma children into the regular school system. The main objectives of the program are:

- To promote the increased participation of Roma children in pre-primary education (0-6 years).
- To promote the continuation in and completion of compulsory education (6-16 years).
- To develop greater skills in terms of school habits, constructive relationships among classmates, and classroom learning techniques.
- To promote the involvement of the Roma families in the educational process.
- To carry out an ongoing diagnosis of the school situation of Roma pupils.

Four complementary sets of interventions are included in the project. The first involves efforts by Roma mediators and trainers to make contacts with teachers and social workers to identify the main problems encountered by Roma pupils and the school (e.g., absenteeism, school conflicts, under-performance, etc.), as well as to increase teacher and staff awareness of Roma culture. The second involves the monitoring of Roma pupils' attendance and performance, including home visits to families to encourage greater support and involvement of parents in their children's education. To develop additional skills, motivation, and cultural confidence, children are recruited to participate in a series of complementary extra-curricular activities developed by the Centers (e.g., dance classes, sports activities, field trips, visits to museums, training workshops). Finally, efforts are undertaken to increase the number of Roma children in preschool education. Earlier exposure to the education system is expected to increase children's overall skill levels, and to improve their familiarity and comfort with formal education.

Results and Challenges

As of 2000, the program has been carried out in 16 state schools, selected from three districts involved in the Plan.³ In 1999, the Program followed the progress and assisted 314 Roma pupils, including with 220 visits to family homes. 174 pupils participated in the formation of 14 workshop groups focusing on traditional Andalusian song and dance.

In 2000, increased attention was given to the problem of continued school attendance of children aged 12 to 16 years with particular emphasis on extra-curricular courses/workshops focused on practical vocational skills (e.g., carpentry, bricklaying). In the first 3 months, the program increased the number of interventions, undertaking the monitoring of 136 pupils, 150 visits to families, and assisting 568 pupils through extra-curricular activities.

Results as of 2000 are difficult to assess in light of the short time since implementation. It was too early to assess increases in educational outcomes. However, there were signs of progress. In addition to the inclusion of an increasing number of Roma pupils in education support initiatives, progress is evident in terms of noticeably lower rates of absenteeism and high levels of participation in and motivation for extra-curricular activities. In particular, Roma participation in activities related to Roma culture (e.g., workshops on traditional Andalusian song and dance) is reportedly high. Moreover, this program has increased constructive contact between Roma and non-Roma, as well as improved awareness of Roma issues within the educational system.

The Program reported a number of on-going challenges including an inability to conduct home visits to all those families in need. Initially, interventions with families were conducted in an unstructured, ad hoc manner by the trainers which in some cases were ineffective at generating greater parental understanding and involvement. As a last resort for children not attending school until the legal age of 16, education authorities may open a file on the pupil and impose fines on the families. However, in the Municipality of Madrid, families reportedly rarely pay, and collection is rarely enforced. Program efforts have been taken to improve on these aspects of this process. In addition, proposals have been put forth suggesting the need for individual tutorials for children with greater learning needs, special training for teaching staff in Roma culture, and the production of educational materials that better reflect Roma culture and interests.

Notes:

1. This Program is also known as the "Program of Support and School Monitoring of Infants and Gypsy Youth."
2. Centers to carry out the implementation of the Plan were set up in the districts of Carabanchel (Pan Bendito), Villaverde/Usara (El Espinillo) and Puente de Vallecas (Adali Cali), with an additional center responsible for overall coordination and management located in the ASGG headquarters in Carabanchel.
3. The schools were chosen on the basis of a set of criteria including: a minimum percentage of Roma pupils, school proximity to the Plan of Action centers, interest of the teachers and administrators.

Source: Martín 2000.

Table 6.2: Roma Population per Autonomous Community (estimates, 1993–1999)

Autonomous Community	Estimate for 1993	% of total Roma population (Spain)	Estimate for 1999
Andalusia	157,097	42.8	286,110
Aragon	10,961	2.7	18,209
Asturias	2,877	0.8	4,780
Balearic Islands	6,877	1.9	5,423
Canary Islands	515	0.1	854
Cantabria	2,320	0.6	4,021
Castile-Leon	20,198	5.5	28,339
Castile-La Mancha	17,072	4.7	33,552
Catalonia	31,881	8.7	52,937
Extremadura	6,811	1.9	11,318
Galicia	7,374	2.0	13,741
Madrid	35,588	9.7	59,082
Murcia	19,877	5.4	33,006
La Rioja	4,433	1.2	7,361
Valencia	31,585	8.6	52,455
Navarra	3,593	0.9	5,954
Basque Country	7,028	1.9	11,675
Ceuta and Melilla	1,222	0.3	2,030
TOTAL	367,039	99.6	630,847

Source: Ministry of Employment and Social Affairs of Spain (El Ministerio del Empleo y Asuntos Sociales de España).

percent of Spanish Roma are below the age of 16 (Giménez Adelantado 1999; ASGG 2001). This can be attributed in part to high birth rates. While the birth rate for Roma in Spain is unknown, in Andalusia, the birth rate is estimated to be 23.8 per thousand, compared to 13 per thousand for non-Roma Andalusians, and 10 per thousand for the total population of Spain (Gamella 1996). Roma women marry at a young age, often as early as 13 to 14 years old, and have children between then and age 30. The average size of a Roma family is 5.4 members, in comparison with 3.7 in the average Spanish family (Congress of Deputies 1999a). Roma also have a lower life expectancy than the general population, estimated at 65 years (Vásquez 1980), compared with the much higher national average of 78.

Labor Market Status

As in Central and Eastern Europe, Roma in Spain were historically employed in traditional trades. Since the 1970s more rapid economic development and technological advances have displaced these jobs. New technologies have ren-

dered many traditional Roma occupations irrelevant or obsolete (e.g., blacksmiths, horse dealers, farm hands, and peddlers). Many rural Roma have been compelled to move to the cities in search of employment.

The labor market characteristics of Roma in Spain differ substantially from those of the rest of the population. Few hold salaried full-time jobs. Most are engaged in independent, part-time or casual labor. Recent data from the Subcommittee of the Parliament (Congress of Deputies 1999b) show that the employment standing of Roma in Spain is characterized by jobs that are low paid and largely in the informal sector. It was estimated that 50 to 80 percent of Roma work in “traditional professions” of peddling, collecting solid urban waste, and performing seasonal work. Another 5 to 15 percent work as antique dealers, shop owners, and in the arts, while 10 to 15 percent work in “new professions” of construction, public works, and as civil servants.

A variety of government and NGO initiatives have been undertaken to improve access to employment for Roma. In particular, job training

and related employment services have been provided in conjunction with the European Social Fund job training initiatives (see Box 6.3).¹²

Housing

During the 1970s, government housing policy was aimed at eliminating shantytowns and informal settlements. A state housing program was developed to address the housing needs of the dislocated, treating Roma and non-Roma equally. Many Roma were relocated to high-rise apartment buildings. However, these relocation programs did not take into consideration Roma preferences. For example, the new buildings did not allow for large families to live together and did not allow Roma to continue with certain occupations, such as the collection and storage of scrap metals. As a result, a large number soon left their new homes to return to more traditional living conditions (Gamella 1996).

In the 1980s, shantytowns continued to grow, populated mostly by Roma. Government policy toward Roma shifted toward the creation of small towns and housing settlements exclusively for Roma. In these towns, more open, one- and two-level houses with courtyard areas were created.

However, because these settlements were generally located on the outskirts of cities and towns where they were more easily neglected by municipal authorities, the condition of many of these settlements rapidly deteriorated into slums. Roma inhabit approximately 95 percent of the *chabolas* (makeshift housing and slums) around larger cities in Spain (Congress of Deputies 1999b). Around 80 percent of these houses are smaller than 50 square meters and house more than 4 people (Congress of Deputies 1999a). The lack of sanitation and running water in these areas threatens the health of the inhabitants. In some areas, particularly those on the outskirts of larger cities, it is reported that this ghettoization and a lack of police presence has contributed to increases in Roma drug use and trafficking.

Since the early 1990s, government policies have evolved to address the specific needs of Roma families (Box 6.5). These policies in part reflect the acknowledgement that the segregation of Roma into isolated communities has inhibited their integration into society, and a recognition that the deterioration of rapidly built, low quality, state-constructed housing has contributed to social deterioration and illegal activities within

Box 6.5: Roma Housing Program in Madrid

The Institute for New Homes and Social Integration (IRIS) was created in 1998, and is run by the Madrid Regional Community.¹ Funding for IRIS is provided by the National Development Program for Roma through the Regional Autonomous Community of Madrid, with some support from the national government.

IRIS has two main objectives: (i) to move slum and ghetto dwellers to improved housing; and (ii) to provide follow-up services for those re-accommodated to facilitate social integration into their new communities. IRIS pursues its objectives by acquiring apartments for Roma families. Along with apartments, IRIS provides follow-up support services.

An estimated 1,550 slum dwellings exist in the city of Madrid, with an additional 305 in the region's municipalities. In 1998, 272 families were re-housed with a similar number in 1999. Subsidies secured in 1998 for these re-accommodations totaled 450 million pesetas.

To date, the program is generally perceived to be a success, in part because of the rapid pace of re-accommodation and the low proportion of program drop-outs (less than 2 percent). These successes are attributed to the process of allocating apartments based on consensus. Additionally, the program makes a significant effort to further social integration through the provision of complementary social programs for children's education and inclusion at school, and employment support.

Note:

1. IRIS was created after the Consortium for Re-accommodation of Slum Dwellers was dissolved. Part of the Consortium's competence was absorbed by the Municipal Housing Enterprise and partly by IRIS.

Source: Martín 2000.

these communities. Currently, housing issues are evaluated on a case-by-case basis, with the aim of integrating Roma families into more diverse neighborhoods and Roma children into the mainstream schools (Box 6.4). A number of new associations and NGOs working with Roma housing issues have also been formed.

Efforts in the housing area over the last 30 years have yielded mixed results. While the overall success of programs and Roma participation has remained relatively low, an increasing number of Roma are taking advantage of better housing opportunities and very few exclusively Roma neighborhoods remain.

Health Status

Reliable data on the health status of Roma in Spain, as in other countries, is scarce and limited to scattered surveys. The information that is available paints a worrisome picture. For example, one study reported a high incidence of birth defects among some groups of Roma (Martinez-Frais and Bermejo 1992). Another study from 1995 reported a nine times higher prevalence of hepatitis A in Spanish Roma children, than in the non-Roma population (Cilla et al 1995). The most serious health problems facing Roma in Spain include: inadequate nutrition, congenital diseases, gaps in vaccination coverage, and drug addiction. HIV/AIDS has also become a concern, however there is no published data on incidence or trends among Roma.

Education

While the Spanish education system has taken additional measures over the last decade to reach Roma students, access to adequate education remains a challenge. Literacy, enrollment, attendance, and completion rates are all very low among Roma. Illiteracy levels for adult Roma are high, with rates approaching 70 percent (Congress of Deputies 1999b). For the population over the age of 55, illiteracy rates for men and women are around 75 percent and 90 percent, respectively (CIDE 1999). However, data on younger Roma indicate that illiteracy rates, while still high, are dropping. For the population under the age of 25, illiteracy rates were 20

percent and 45 percent for men and women respectively (CIDE 1999). One important factor contributing to the lower illiteracy rates for Roma young people is that the law on compulsory education, requiring children between the ages of 6 and 15 to attend school, began to be enforced in 1990.

Despite gains in literacy, the Spanish school system is still not adequately reaching or retaining many Roma children. In a 1993 report, an estimated 25 percent of Roma children of school age were not enrolled in school (Jiménez González 1993). According to the same source, of those 75 percent enrolled, 36 percent did not attend school regularly. Other sources report truancy rates that are sometimes as high as 70 percent (Congress of Deputies 1999b). Additionally, the school dropout rate is very high, at close to 60 percent for boys and 80 percent for girls (Jiménez González 1993). Most dropouts leave school after age 11, although most boys spend more years in school than girls.

A very small number of Roma finish the required 10 years of education in Spain, known as the *Educación General Básica* (Basic General Education). In 1993, it was estimated that only about 5 percent of Roma pupils completed, and only 1 percent of Roma students succeeded in reaching secondary education (university preparation). In 1993, the total number of Roma students attending university in Spain was 200. Another study found that up to 80 percent of Roma pupils do not complete basic education and many pupils are two or more years behind the average (Santos 1999).

Barriers to Roma Education

Roma children in Spain face barriers to education which are similar to many of the issues discussed in earlier chapters for Roma in Central and Eastern Europe, including discrimination, cultural perceptions about the role and value of education, and systemic constraints inherent in the educational system.

Schools can be a hostile environment for Roma children. Roma may face discrimination at school, both from non-Roma (*payo*) parents and teachers, as well as school administrators and local authorities (Jiménez González 1993). Low

school attendance and completion rates are often attributed to low demand for education among Roma families (Roma 2000). Low demand may be due in part to the opportunity costs of education, and the need for children, and particularly girls, to work at home. As basic education does not guarantee Roma students a job upon completion, many Roma students see few incentives to stay in school. Concerns also exist about the negative impact of majority values that are transmitted through the education system on traditional Roma culture (Santos 1999).

Finally, a recent study identified a number of shortcomings with the government's current education policy in their ability to reach Roma students (Roma 2000). These include deficiencies in the remedial education system, the lack of multicultural education, and insufficient attention to teacher training.

REMEDIAL EDUCATION. Under the Spanish education system, disadvantaged students are provided support through "remedial education." To a large degree, remedial programs have evolved into technical and language training courses to prepare students for (often low-wage) employment. Further, under the program, disadvantaged students are provided with school books, meals, hygiene programs, and vaccinations. This system has been criticized as perpetuating the segregation of Roma children from their non-Roma peers, as well as limiting their ability to pursue higher education.

LACK OF MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION. School curricula typically do not include materials on Roma. Although efforts are being made to increase educational materials in schools that teach students about Roma in a positive manner, there is still a very long way to go. As of 1993, Roma culture was still largely absent from textbooks. One study examined close to 49,000 pages from texts used in primary and middle school, secondary school, and technical training, and found that only 50 lines made any mention of Roma (Calvo Buezas 1989). The majority of these references to Roma "were either foolish or negative representations of them." The inability of Roma children to identify with their own history and values in school is

thought to contribute to lower levels of attendance and academic performance.

INSUFFICIENT TEACHER TRAINING. Similarly, there continues to be a widespread lack of teacher training on issues of cultural diversity, such as multicultural education and social and cultural anthropology of the minority groups within Spain. Although some attempts have been made to provide courses on Roma schooling and multicultural education, there has not been a concerted and organized effort to educate teachers on these issues.

CONCLUSIONS

The Spanish experience provides a useful example for the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. In post-Franco Spain, improving economic conditions, better social services, European integration, and a democratic system have opened opportunities for tackling poverty across the country, and for Roma in particular. The National Program for the Development of Roma provides a framework for the involvement of regional and local governments and NGOs in Roma issues—including many Roma themselves. The European Social Fund—an instrument that will soon be available to the accession countries—has also been involved in project development and finance.

This context has promoted innovative projects which aim to overcome exclusion in education, housing, employment, and other areas. While further evaluation is needed, projects such as the Acceder employment project, which provides Roma with support for entering the mainstream labor market are useful project experience for the Central and Eastern European countries. In fact, the NGO which runs the Acceder project has consulted in Slovakia and Hungary. The experience of Roma projects in Spain has not been wholly positive. Lessons from failed housing projects can also provide cautionary examples.

Indeed, the situation of Roma living in Spain is far from ideal. Projects and policies suffer many of the same weaknesses as other countries, including lack of sustainability and an absence of monitoring and evaluation. However, the robust NGO community, the high level of Roma participation in projects,

and a positive track record of initiatives in key social areas are a promising base for further progress.

NOTES

1. For example, Fresno (1994) estimates that there are between 400,000 and 450,000 Roma in Spain. In 1997, the Unión Romani suggested there were between 500,000 and 600,000, while in 1999, the Subcommittee of the Spanish Parliament estimated that the size of the population was 630,000.

2. Caló (also called Gitano, Iberian Romani, Hispanoromani) is considered a version of Spanish which is based on a combination of Romani, regional dialects, and Spanish and Portuguese. It is also spoken in Brazil, France, and Portugal by small numbers of people.

3. Summer Institute of Language (SIL) Ethnologue http://www.ethnologue.com/show_language.asp?code=RMR

4. Taxpayers are given a choice as to which they wish their money to be allocated to.

5. Established in 1989, this body consists of delegates from the General Directorate of Social Action within the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, and from the Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces.

6. Formed in 1990, this group is comprised of representatives from the General Directorate of Social Action and from various national Roma organizations. Roma NGOs joined the commission in 1993.

7. Due to a lack of systematic monitoring and evaluation of projects, data on the specific kinds of projects which are being implemented, the allocation of resources and relative weight of spending on different sectors was not available.

8. Some of the more prominent Roma associations and nonprofit organizations with programs for the Roma community funded in part by NPDR are: the Asociacion Nacional Presencia Gitana (ANPG), the Fundacion Secretariado General Gitano (FSGG), Union Romani, Federacion de Asociaciones Romanies Andaluzas (FARA), Federacion de Asociaciones Gitanas de Aragon (FAGA), Federacion de Asociaciones Gitanas de Castilla y Leon, Federacion de Asociaciones Gitanas de Cataluna (FAGIC), Federacion de Asociaciones Gitanas de Extremenos (FAGEX), Federacion Autonómica de Asociaciones Gitanas de la Comunidad Valenciana, Caritas Espanola, and the Spanish Red Cross.

9. Information drawn primarily from ASGG 2001 and www.fsgg.org.

10. Prior to 2001, the FSGG was known as the Asociacion Secretariado General Gitano (ASGG). While this chapter refers only to the FSGG, any actions and programs prior to 2001 were undertaken through the ASGG.

11. In 2001, of the 657 staff, 457 were salaried workers and 190 were volunteers or interns. Community mediators and educators comprise 42 percent of the staff; administrators responsible for the coordination and management of programs and teams account for 39 percent of the staff.

12. Since 1994, The European Social Fund's INTEGRA program has promoted measures to improve access to the labor market and the employability of marginalized groups (e.g. long-term unemployed, Roma, homeless).

Chapter Seven: THE ROAD AHEAD

The plight of Roma in Central and Eastern Europe has not gone unnoticed. During the 1990s, initiatives by governments, NGOs, and international organizations addressed various issues related to Roma, from human rights to racial stereotyping in the media to education and employment. This volume was designed to advance these efforts by providing detailed information about the nature of Roma poverty, the course of project experience thus far, and avenues for future policy. This chapter suggests some lessons learned—first, about the nature of Roma poverty and the policy context in Europe; second, about general policy approaches for addressing Roma poverty; and finally, about specific policies.

Improving conditions for Roma is closely linked to the overall success of each country's economic and social development strategies. In this context, policymakers need to make it a priority to implement policies that promote and sustain growth while trying to boost social welfare and ensure the overall inclusiveness of government policies. But the extent and characteristics of Roma poverty indicate that these sectorwide policies will not be sufficient. Some areas will require targeted interventions to ensure that Roma are able to participate fully in the labor market, public services, and society in general.

THE NATURE OF ROMA POVERTY AND THE POLICY CONTEXT

The unique characteristics of Roma poverty mean that certain issues must be addressed country by country. But some common lessons and implications cut across national borders. In particular, policies to address Roma poverty must respond to three main aspects of the policy environment: (i) the multidimensional roots of Roma

poverty; (ii) the diversity of Roma populations; and (iii) the context of European integration.

Aspects of Roma Poverty

Roma poverty is strikingly high in Central and Eastern Europe. Poverty rates for Roma in Bulgaria, Hungary, and Romania are as much as ten times that of non-Roma. As with non-Roma citizens, poverty among Roma is highest among families where the household head has little education or is unemployed, and among families with three or more children. These characteristics are also found among the non-Roma poor. But for Roma, the chances of being poor are higher than for their non-Roma neighbors, irrespective of education level and employment. The conclusion is clear: Roma poverty is partly related to low educational attainment, limited labor market participation, and larger family sizes, but it also stems from factors associated with being Roma, including the multiple dimensions of exclusion.

Qualitative case studies of Roma poverty showed that many of the causes of Roma poverty are interrelated. For instance, access to health care and waste collection is limited in remote Roma settlements. Roma parents sometimes enroll their children in special schools for the mentally handicapped after suffering discrimination in regular schools. The interconnections between the different aspects of Roma social exclusion uncovered in this study suggest that Roma poverty cannot be addressed by projects that focus on a single issue. Instead, poor Roma need comprehensive policy approaches that address all sides of their plight.

Another important finding of this study—highlighted in the case of Slovakia—is that the marginalization of a Roma settlement correlates to its level of poverty. Roma living in more remote and segregated neighborhoods have

fewer chances to participate in the mainstream economy, access social services (including education and health care), and tap into social networks and information about economic opportunities such as jobs. In other words, geographic and social exclusion are important correlates of poverty. In contrast, Roma living in integrated areas are more likely to interact with non-Roma, leaving them better positioned to spot and seize economic opportunities.

Multidimensionality of Roma Poverty

Roma poverty extends far beyond relative income deprivation. Instead, it relates to a complex set of phenomena including poor labor market and education status, inadequate housing, the legacies of past policies, and a long history of troubled relations between Roma and majority populations in Central and Eastern Europe. All of these factors combine to make it hard to address individual problems in isolation.

For instance, as the country case studies show, deep-seated mistrust and poor communication between Roma and public officials make even a seemingly simple immunization program difficult to implement. Roma parents sometimes refuse immunizations, distrusting the intentions of doctors. Indeed, health officials in Romania resorted to intimidation to press Roma women to immunize their children. But such coercion was, at the very best, a partial, stop-gap solution that helped a few children's health even as it deepened underlying social divisions. Key, interrelated features of Roma social exclusion include:

POOR LABOR MARKET STATUS. As detailed in Chapter Two one of the primary reasons Roma have been slower to benefit from the transition to market economies has been their difficulty in securing employment.

GEOGRAPHIC EXCLUSION. As Chapter Three highlights, Roma poverty is often closely related to the geographic separation of Roma settlements. In Slovakia, such remote towns were legacies of World War II-era discrimination. Roma living in such far-flung communities were poorer and more cut off from basic social services.

A LEGACY OF DISCRIMINATION. Chapter Two showed that, correcting for factors such as educational attainment and age, there was still an undefined "Roma factor" in poverty rates. All other considerations and explanations aside, Roma were simply more likely to be poor. This probably reflects both discrimination and the aftermath of poor relations between Roma and the majority communities in Central and Eastern Europe—a heritage of intolerance that itself results in part from past state policies and deep societal prejudices.

Attention to Diversity

While demonstrating the distinctive nature of Roma poverty, this volume also emphasizes the diversity of the Roma themselves. Roma are not all alike; neither are their social conditions. Indeed, the ethnic, occupational, religious, and economic diversity among Roma populations is tremendous. The proportion of Roma-language speakers differs greatly from country to country, as does the proportion living in cities, integrated neighborhoods, or segregated rural settlements. These differences deeply affect welfare. Efforts to create, define, or represent a single Roma community will founder on the rocks of internal diversity. Roma tend to have distinctive problems of integration and access, but the situations of vastly different communities and individuals cannot be shoehorned into a single, simple set of answers.

The European Dimension

Policies for addressing Roma poverty also must be framed in the context of Central and Eastern European countries' drive for European Union membership. The timing of the publication of this volume and other reports on Roma is hardly coincidental. Roma poverty has gained attention because of the accelerating process of European integration. To meet the EU's accession criteria, Central and East European countries have built institutions and passed legislation to address Roma issues. However, this marks only the beginning of the process. Even after accession—for some countries, as early as 2004—tackling Roma poverty will require a long-term approach that

remains part of each country's overall economic and social development program.

The main channel for EU support for Roma-related activities in candidate countries is the PHARE program.¹ Between 1993 and 1999, 20 million Euro were allocated to Roma-linked projects across six candidate countries (European Commission 1999). The total amount of PHARE funding allocated for financing Roma projects in candidate countries has risen from 11.7 million Euro in 1999 to 31.4 million in 2001 (European Commission 2002, Table 7.1).² The European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights has also provided EU financing.³ In the four years after the initiative's establishment in 1994, approximately 4.5 million Euro were allocated to Roma projects. The Directorate General for Education and Culture also manages programs to encourage cooperation between EU member states and candidate countries in the fields of education, training, and youth. Projects for Roma are also supported through the Socrates and the Youth for Europe Programmes.⁴

Beyond direct funding, the European Union has dramatically shaped the policy context through the accession criteria that have led all candidate countries to put in place institutions and legislative mechanisms to address Roma

issues, even as they develop long-term strategies for reducing Roma poverty. However, this marks only the beginning of the process. Even once accession happens—as early as 2004 for some countries—addressing Roma poverty will take a long-term approach.

The European dimension of the Roma poverty issue provides a useful framework for policy. First, Roma are not poor only in Central and Eastern Europe. Chapter Six examined the situation in Spain, which has also faced issues of integration and Roma poverty. Second, the process of European integration offers a unique opportunity for addressing Roma poverty at a cross-national level. It also lets countries learn from one another throughout the accession process. Third, since the ongoing project of creating an integrated Europe will not be completed when the latest accession treaties are ratified, the accession process offers both an opportunity to institutionalize a long-term approach to reducing Roma deprivation in Central and Eastern Europe, and a chance to reflect on the shortcomings of Roma policy further west.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND APPROACHES

The multidimensional roots of Roma poverty, the diversity of Roma communities, and the European context suggest several policy implications.

Table 7.1: PHARE-Funded Programs for Roma in Central and Eastern Europe, 1993–2001

EC Grants, in thousands of Euro					
	1993-1997 ^{1,2}	1999	2000	2001	Total
Bulgaria	1,565	500	3,500	6,350	11,915
Czech Republic	1,778	500	2,850	3,000	8,128
Hungary	1,919	6,900	2,500	5,000	16,319
Romania	2,661	0	1,000	7,000	10,661
Slovakia	1,935	3,800	3,800	10,000	19,535
Total	9,858	11,700	13,650	31,350	66,558

1. Includes funds in support of Roma communities channeled through the Civil Society Development Foundations (funded under the PHARE National Programme), the Democracy Programme, the Lien Programme, and the Access Programme.

2. Includes both macro and micro projects: macro-projects are large partnership projects intended to promote sustained activities for up to 24 months and which may continue after the EU grant has ended; micro-projects are intended to contribute to citizens' initiatives and locally inspired activities.

Source: European Commission, Directorate General for Enlargement, 2002.

Only a comprehensive policy approach can simultaneously address multiple causes of poverty. Moreover, with full respect for their heritage and deep involvement by their leaders, Roma must be better integrated into European societies. Here, some useful lessons can be drawn from other countries with similar experiences. Finally, any policies that are tried must be carefully implemented, meticulously evaluated, and anchored in participation by Roma themselves. The following section addresses these policy lessons, before discussing more specific interventions.

Links with Systemic Reform

Better access to quality social services for Roma is linked to the overall effectiveness of each country's education, health, and social protection systems. Throughout the region, countries have embarked upon complex systemic reforms to improve the efficiency, equity, and relevance of public services. In many ways, the socialist systems were ill-suited to the realities of a market economy. One way in which they have proven ineffective is in their inability to reach vulnerable groups, including the Roma. But this is hardly just a minority issue. Systemic reform, improved access, and higher quality social services will improve conditions for the entire population.

Reducing unemployment is a critical step toward reducing poverty and improving living standards. This requires a multi-pronged approach. It is necessary but not sufficient to maintain macroeconomic and political stability, and advance financial sector reform. Increasing employment opportunities hinge on a better environment for job creation—including measures to support small, and medium-sized enterprises—and easier credit for small entrepreneurs. Many of these measures can encourage self-employment and entrepreneurship.

Another national-level issue that would help unskilled Roma workers is lowering the non-wage costs of labor. High payroll taxes and non-wage labor costs in many countries discourage employers from hiring unskilled laborers, who are proportionately more expensive than workers with higher skills. Studies in numerous OECD countries show that the unskilled are often hurt

the worst by such non-wage labor costs (World Bank 2001b).

Education reform, too, is particularly relevant for Roma. Comprehensive reforms of both general and vocational education are needed to better prepare workers for the labor market. Secondary school programs and curricula must be reviewed to ensure that they properly position young people for the labor market by shifting away from narrow vocational and technical training, to more general, rigorous, and academic programs. Improved vocational education, which expands elements of the general education curriculum, could attract young Roma and help them secure marketable skills.

Reforms of social assistance can improve work incentives and reduce the risk of dependency on cash benefits. Many countries have worked to ensure that social assistance benefits provide a meaningful safety net for the poor. Benefits must not inadvertently discourage able-bodied people from working even as they help low-income working families.

In addition to improving the effectiveness of cash benefits, reforms of social assistance should also enhance the roles of social workers working with poor communities. Social workers in most countries in the region function largely as administrators, instead of fully utilizing their capacities to work with individuals and households. For many Roma in the most isolated settlements, social workers are the main contact point with the outside world. These workers should refer their clients to other social services, provide information about employment opportunities, and counsel and support households in a variety of ways.

An Inclusive Approach

Since Roma poverty is rooted in broad-based social exclusion—economic, social, and geographic—ameliorating it will require an inclusive approach designed to expand and promote Roma involvement and participation in mainstream society, while maintaining their cultural and social autonomy. Only policies that let Roma take advantage of national and European labor and housing markets, education, and health systems, and social and political networks have a chance

of reducing poverty over the long term. Therefore, existing policies should be made more accessible to Roma, and new initiatives should specifically reach Roma. Policies of inclusion would complement rights-based approaches by tackling the economic and social barriers which Roma face.

A central policy goal should be the multifaceted inclusion of Roma into institutions and mechanisms that create economic and social opportunities. The emphasis here should be placed on incentives, not coercion. Interventions that reduce Roma isolation and exclusion can help improve their living conditions over the longer term. An inclusive approach must also include Roma in the projects and programs that affect them. Several successful projects use Roma mentors to bridge between Roma and non-Roma communities. Roma teachers' assistants who work with parents, or Roma peer advisors who help with job placement, can facilitate social integration while strengthening the Roma community itself.

An inclusive approach should also overcome divisions between Roma and non-Roma. Such policies build trust and help develop social capital. In most cases, inclusive policies should target everyone in a community, rather than just Roma, although there may be exceptions where explicit attention to ethnicity is necessary, as in overcoming language barriers. Multicultural education and curricula that include the history and culture of Roma and other minorities are also critical for overcoming cultural barriers. Training teachers, local government officials, and other social service personnel can reduce discrimination by public service providers. Finally, public information campaigns can promote multiculturalism and raise general awareness about discrimination. In this vein, policies that expand opportunities include:

- Reducing segregation in housing, particularly by alleviating problems associated with isolated rural settlements;
- Integrating Roma students into mainstream educational systems by establishing preschool programs and providing food, clothing transportation subsidies to make it easier for poor students to attend;

- Increasing outreach to Roma communities by social service providers, including health and social workers;
- Involving Roma as liaisons between communities and public services;
- Providing job training and programs that increase Roma participation in formal labor markets.

An inclusive approach rejects the coercion implicit in assimilationist and exclusionary policy approaches towards Roma while remaining compatible with the rights-based approaches discussed in Chapter One. Nevertheless, a policy approach based on social inclusion centers on improving opportunities and social and economic welfare. Often, rights are necessary but not sufficient to create opportunities. One reason for this is that rights are often exercised vis-à-vis the state, while economic opportunities arise from the market. Participation in market activities often cannot be mandated. Thus an inclusive policy must be comprehensive, creating incentives for inclusion across a range of market, state, and social networks and institutions.

Learning from Example

When considering future policy directions, ideas may be found in the policy experiences of other countries' and regions' minority policies, particularly in the West. North and South American countries provide interesting counterpoints to European experiences, in part because the histories of African and indigenous peoples in the Americas offer more parallels to Roma than to other national minorities in Europe. While all ethnic groups have distinct features, minority-majority relations share important similarities everywhere, and much can be learned from the policy experience of countries that have confronted these issues in the past and still face them today. These issues deserve further exploration.

To be sure, Roma in Europe have endured centuries of exclusionary and assimilationist policies without being absorbed into majority societies. They remain stateless and have founded no movement for statehood. In this regard, their closest parallel may be with native Americans, a separate ethnolinguistic community that has

often preferred preserving its own traditions and way of life to integration. These general characteristics underline both the challenges facing an inclusive approach to Roma poverty and the long-term nature of the policy responses required. They also underscore the stakes.

Attention to Evaluation and Implementation

The development of a comprehensive national policy response to Roma poverty must be combined with attention to monitoring, evaluation, and implementation. The range of Roma projects in Central and Eastern Europe has provided much experience in implementation. Still, despite the high level of activity, very few initiatives have been evaluated or monitored, making it extremely difficult to identify lessons for the future. As countries move forward, they must examine this growing body of experience. A related priority is the need to build mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation into new and ongoing initiatives and to provide opportunities for exchanging information within and across countries.

FILLING INFORMATION GAPS. The first step toward increasing monitoring and evaluation capacity—and, hence, improving project design—is making more and better information available. This volume has highlighted the critical lack of basic information about Roma. To remedy this, countries need to examine their statistical instruments and administrative data to find out how they can better capture policy-relevant information on Roma and other minorities. Multilateral coordination, advice, and guidance can help ensure the comparability of data. Still, more information on international practices is needed, particularly in addressing privacy issues about ethnic identification. On a related note, the outcomes of targeted public policies and NGO initiatives require close monitoring, and the results of program evaluations should be used for ongoing policy development. The lessons should be disseminated across regions and countries.

Gaps in information about poverty and welfare persist at both the country level and about particular subject areas. In particular, more information is needed on the conditions of Roma in

the countries of the former Yugoslavia. The review of the western literature on Roma undertaken for this report found little data on Roma in these countries, despite the large estimated Roma population in countries such as FYR Macedonia. From a sectoral perspective, regular and comparable information on Roma household welfare and living conditions—in addition to data on education and health status—are needed across countries to identify community needs and develop policy strategies. Of the main policy areas, health (particularly reproductive health) has perhaps been the most neglected to date, and instruments for monitoring health status and communicable diseases are sorely needed.

While privacy concerns about data collection must be respected, policy makers need up-to-date information to design programs and monitor outcomes. Such data collection should benefit Roma in the long run through better-designed and targeted interventions. To protect privacy, declarations of ethnicity should be voluntary, and periodic sample surveys, rather than national administrative data, should be used to collect information on specific topics. Roma groups must also be involved in the development, implementation, and analysis of surveys, as happened during the 2001 census in Slovakia. Finally, qualitative assessments can also provide valuable information for project design.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION. The importance of building monitoring and evaluation mechanisms into projects and policies cannot be overstressed (Box 7.1). To ensure accountability, monitoring should be an integral part of all projects. Evaluations to assess a project's impact and outcomes are equally important. This entails collecting baseline data at the start of a project to use for comparison once the project has been completed. For example, an intervention designed to improve school enrollment should measure enrollment before the project began and then assess whether participants stay in school longer and perform better with the new program in place. The time horizon for outcome evaluation should also be enough to assess the longer-term impact. Again, in the case of education, the eval-

Box 7.1: Monitoring and Evaluating School Success for Roma Children

The Step-by-Step Special Schools Initiative, supported by the Open Society Institute, provides a useful example of how project evaluation can improve the success of a project and contribute to policy development. This project aimed to address a particularly troubling problem: the shunting of Roma children into “special schools” intended for the mentally and physically handicapped. It also sought to formulate policy recommendations that would improve the chances for Roma children in mainstream schools.

The project operated in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Slovakia. Roma students in special schools in each of the countries were taught the mainstream curriculum instead of the slower special school curriculum. Teachers and administrators were trained in anti-bias education, second-language learning, and the Step-by-Step methodology. Additional support was provided in the form of classroom materials. A Roma assistant teacher was assigned to each site to help in the classroom and work with students and their families outside of school.

Evaluation was built into the project from the start. Local researchers were hired to collect data in each project site, as well as several control sites; their efforts were coordinated by an international researcher who ensured the data’s comparability. Data were collected on process indicators such as student attendance and parental involvement, as well as on educational outcomes. Students were also tested at the end of each academic year, and interviews were conducted with students and parents. *Monitoring* was integral to the project to keep it on track. Master teacher-trainers at the national and international levels worked closely with project staff to provide support and ensure consistency across project sites.

The results after the second year of the project were heartening. On aggregate, the project found that 64 percent of Roma second-graders in the project sites did not belong in special schools. In other words, these Roma pupils were able to meet national standards for the mainstream curriculum with the support of the project. These powerful results make the case for interventions to get Roma children out of special schools and into mainstream classes. The empirical analysis makes a compelling case that investments in education for Roma students—including teacher training, language support, and parental involvement—can pay off over the longer term; graduates of mainstream schools have far more employment and education opportunities than graduates of the special schools. Similarly, the ongoing monitoring let project managers make course corrections and distill lessons for follow-on projects.

Source: Rona and Lee 2001.

uation should consider not just whether children are in school at the end of the project, but what they have learned, whether they graduate, whether they continue their education, and how the project affected their chances for higher education and employment.

Ensuring Participation

Regardless of whether policies are explicitly designed for Roma, Roma must be involved. The track record of programs directed at Roma—during both the socialist and transition periods—clearly showed that including Roma in the design, implementation, and evaluation of programs is essential for success. The recent past is littered with projects and programs, however

well-intentioned, that failed because they were designed and implemented without the participation of the future beneficiaries—such as housing projects that built apartments that were unsuitable for Roma or social assistance programs that gave Roma goods they would rather have sold.

Roma involvement in policy and project development rests on the existence of effective mechanisms for participation. While Roma have been increasingly involved in civil society and policymaking, significant challenges remain. Some of these have been discussed earlier, including lingering prejudices, mistrust between Roma and non-Roma, and the low education levels and widespread illiteracy that shrink the potential

pool of Roma leaders and voters. Policymakers must continue to expand opportunities for Roma to participate in civil society and public service at the local and national levels. Non-Roma involvement is also crucial. The example of Slovakia in Chapter Three highlighted the perils of segregation. Roma who do not interact with wider society, including other Roma communities and non-Roma, are cut off from social services, the labor market, education, and—all too often—prosperity. More contacts and partnerships between non-Roma and Roma will ease the mistrust and miscommunication that limit local and community development.

Across the region, post-Soviet political liberalization created a proliferation of civil society organizations, including NGOs, political parties, religious organizations, and community associations. Many groups have been formed to address particular issues related to ethnic minorities, including a wide range of Roma organizations, many of them financed by external sources. Chapter Five discussed the range of NGOs around Roma issues in Hungary. Similarly, a 1996 survey carried out by the Union of Bulgarian Foundations and Associations identified more than 1,300 organizations that addressed ethnic issues and put Roma among their priorities (Iliev 1999).

Roma NGOs, like Roma communities themselves, are diverse and often fragmented. In some cases, this limits the effectiveness of Roma in their dialogue with government officials and other potential partners. Roma organizations disagree frequently and struggle to reach consensus. This may reflect several issues, including the groups' relative political inexperience, divisions between Roma subgroups, and some characteristics of Roma social organization such as the rather common absence of hierarchical structures within Roma groups.

Local governments are also important. Throughout the region, the role of local governments has changed substantially during the transition as decentralization replaces communist centralization. The process of building effective, accountable, responsive local governments has not been an easy one—with particularly unfortu-

nate consequences for society's most vulnerable, including Roma. Roma participate in local governments by running for elective office, using public services, and interacting with local officials. Local governments could also be important sources of support for Roma communities, individuals, and associations. But, as the Nyíregyháza case study from Hungary in Chapter Five illustrated, local governments can also further marginalize Roma. Even where national policies do not discriminate, biased implementation at the local level can derail original intentions.

In recent years, all countries in the region have introduced institutions for integrating Roma into policymaking at the national and local levels. Perhaps the most ambitious approach was taken in Hungary, which in 1993 introduced a system of minority self-governments, as discussed in Chapter Five. Other countries, including the Czech and Slovak Republics and Romania, have established national consultative bodies to shape policymaking related to minorities.

In the Czech case, a new Inter-Ministerial Commission comprised of Roma and non-Roma representatives of government agencies now advises the parliament. In Romania, the Council of National Minorities, tied to the parliament, includes representatives from minority organizations. The strength of these bodies varies, however, and some even lack budgets. In most cases, it is too early to gauge how representative and effective these institutions are.

Many countries have also recently adopted national policy strategies on Roma issues. Such a plan is currently under discussion in Serbia and Montenegro. In Bulgaria, the government adopted "The Framework Program for Equal Integration of Roma in Bulgarian Society" in March 1999—the culmination of an unprecedented process of consultation and consensus-building both between the government and Bulgaria's Roma community and among Roma NGOs themselves. The program, which was endorsed by 75 Roma NGOs, offers strategic guidelines in the areas of antidiscrimination policy, economic development, and social services (OSCE 2000).

While it is too soon to judge the impact of these strategies and action plans, they have helped ele-

vate dialogue between the Roma community and national governments and have raised core policy issues. Examples from Western European countries—such as Spain, a case discussed in Chapter Six—can provide useful insights here.

POLICY DIRECTIONS

Addressing Roma issues will take experimentation, patience, and close collaboration between Roma communities, the international community, NGOs, and national governments. Initiatives need to be designed and adapted to local country circumstances, as well as to the varying needs of Roma groups. Policies need to balance three related sets of objectives: first, increasing economic opportunities by expanding employment participation; second, building human capital through better education and health; and third, strengthening social capital and community development through increased Roma empowerment and participation. Implementing these measures will involve collaboration between central government ministries, local governments, Roma communities, NGOs, and international partners.

EMPLOYMENT. Expanding labor market opportunities is a priority throughout the region. Opportunities must be widely shared, and the poorest must have the means to take advantage of new jobs. Without this, a core poor “underclass” will persist. Specific attention is needed to address the

additional barriers that Roma face, including lower education status, geographic isolation, and discrimination. Experiences from Spain and Hungary provide examples of promising employment projects (Box 7.2). Initiatives that increase opportunities for Roma in the labor market start with improvements in education status.

Improving access to credit makes it easier for Roma and other low income groups to start their own businesses. NGOs can play an important role in helping communities initiate projects. Partnerships between these organizations and banks are needed to establish credit mechanisms. On a related note, expanding the availability of microcredit could weaken the grasp of local usurers who currently lend funds at extortionate rates in some Roma settlements.

Another important element is more effective public works programs. Many current programs focus on short-term, low-skilled employment and provide participants with neither enhanced skills nor better long-term employment prospects. Governments should improve the quality and training content of public works jobs so that participants gain transferable skills.

Training programs can also facilitate labor market reentry for low-skilled and unskilled workers. However, because international experience with such programs is mixed, programs must be carefully tailored to fit labor-market conditions—a point particularly relevant to Roma

Box 7.2: Promoting Roma Employment

One of the most established programs to promote employment and income-generating opportunities for Roma is Hungary’s Autonomía Foundation, which provides grants and interest-free loans to develop employment programs for Roma. Its income generating initiatives include livestock breeding, agricultural programs, and small enterprise development.

The success of Autonomía’s projects, as measured by the repayment rate of its loans, has soared since the foundation was established in 1990. In 1998, repayment rates reached nearly 80 percent, compared to 10 percent during Autonomía’s first year. Autonomía attributes this improvement to the involvement of trained monitors, some of whom are Roma, who work closely with project teams throughout the implementation process. Autonomía is now expanding its programs to other countries in the region. In 2000, the first group of Roma began training to start small grant-and-loan programs for Roma in four CEE countries, including Slovakia. Further evaluation of the project should examine the impact of the project on participants’ welfare.

Sources: Autonomía Foundation; Tanaka et al. 1998.

(Dar and Tzannatos 1999). Some initiatives have sought to train Roma in traditional trades that are not in much demand.

At the policy level, antidiscrimination legislation must be in place, complete with effective and accessible mechanisms for appeals. Beyond legislative measures, project interventions can overcome barriers between non-Roma and Roma by building confidence through on-the-job training and employment experience. A successful public works project in Bulgaria showed non-Roma contractors that Roma could be reliable, effective employees—a standing rebuke to deeply held stereotypes about Roma laziness. Another possible approach is offering tax incentives to employers who employ Roma.

EDUCATION. Because education is so central to improved welfare and economic status, it has been a priority focus for both governments and NGOs. More project activity has taken place in the education area over the past decade than in any other sector. The review of social sector projects in Hungary presented in Chapter Five found that nearly 30 percent of resources allocated to Roma projects during the past decade were for education.

Initiatives in education take various forms and intervene at different points within the education cycle. One key priority is lowering the barriers that prevent Roma children from starting school. Many children are discouraged from attending school because of deprivation at home and cultural differences, including language. Economic constraints can be loosened by coordinating social assistance and education policies to ease the cost of education for poor families—including such tactics as school feeding programs (which boost both nutrition and attendance), linkages between child allowances and school enrollments, and scholarships for low income students. Social workers can also identify households in need of assistance.

Preschool programs can prepare children for the classroom and surmount language barriers. Several countries have tried targeted preprimary initiatives to facilitate school attendance and performance. In 2002, the Bulgarian government announced its intention to make preschool free

and compulsory. For its part, the Slovak government has supported the Zero Grade Program, which expands preschool attendance for Roma children.

NGOs can also play important roles. The Open Society Foundation initiated the “Step-by-Step” program, modeled on the US “Head Start” initiative, in both Roma and non-Roma communities. In 2000, over 8,000 Roma students in 17 countries in Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union enrolled in Step-by-Step programs. Step-by-Step takes an integrated approach that provides training and support to teachers while involving parents in the classroom. Parental involvement at all levels of education should be explored and fostered, including bringing parents into the classroom as teachers’ aides, parent-teacher associations, and regular parent-teacher interactions.

Initiatives that reduce the dropout rate and smooth the way to secondary and tertiary education are also critical, but there is less experience here. Still, mentoring programs and extracurricular activities that provide tutoring and supplementary educational events have been introduced in some countries. Schools like the Gandhi School in Pécs, Hungary, and the Romani High School for Social Affairs in Kolin in the Czech Republic integrate Romani studies, including language, history, and culture into the curriculum. Successful elements from these schools—including multicultural curricula, teacher training, and parental involvement—can be incorporated into all public schools (Box 7.3).

Better education for Roma students can boost school attendance and educational outcomes. This will require fighting discrimination within school systems and diminishing the role of special schools and institutions for Roma. The practice of unnecessarily channeling Roma students into special schools in the first place must be reviewed, as should policies that limit the future opportunities of special school graduates. Special education should be reformed to address true learning disabilities and the special needs of at-risk children.

Limiting the use of separate classrooms and schools for Roma can improve education quality

Box 7.3: Alternative Secondary Schools in Hungary

Hungary has experimented with alternative approaches to secondary-school education that aim to help Roma children bridge the gap between basic and secondary school, improve their academic performance, and create future opportunities. Roma are much less likely to start and complete secondary school than other children. A 1993 survey of Roma in Hungary found that only 1 percent of Roma took the final examination for secondary schools and only 13 percent received training as skilled workers.

A review of these alternative approaches commissioned by the World Bank looked at six different schools, most of which had been established during the previous five years. All of the schools were private and received support from a range of local and international foundations and NGOs, as well as state budget subsidies. While most students in each of these schools were Roma, not all the institutions explicitly targeted Roma children.

The type of education provided by the different schools varies greatly. In some cases, the schools provide vocational training, such as the “Roma Chance” Alternative Vocational Foundation School in Szolnok, the Don Bosco Vocational Training Center and Primary School in Kazincbarcika, and Budapest’s Kalyi Jag School. Others, such as the Józsefváros School and the Collegium Martineum in Mánfa, support secondary school students through extracurricular activities and classes and (in the case of the Collegium Martineum) dormitory accommodations in a supportive home environment. Finally, the Gandhi School and Students’ Hostel in Pécs is a six-year secondary school (or gymnasium) that prepares students for university.

The schools differ in the extent to which they emphasize the Roma background of their students in their curricula and approach. In most of the schools, strengthening Roma identity and preserving Roma tradition are explicit and integral components of school mission. These schools offer classes in Roma language, history, and art. Others, such as Don Bosco, focus on building the self-confidence of students through professional training.

The schools also take different approaches to the underlying socioeconomic disadvantages of students. Some, such as the Collegium Martineum, target disadvantaged students and provide housing and other support to boost attendance. Most of the schools also involve parents, although this often proves difficult because of low education levels.

Source: Orsós et al. 2001.

and reduce divisions between Roma and non-Roma communities. Within schools, separate classrooms for Roma should be abolished. For geographically remote settlements, other options could be considered, such as the pilot project in Bulgaria that transports Roma children from a Roma settlement to an integrated school (Box 7.4).

Teachers define the quality of education and must be trained to meet the challenges of a multicultural environment. Ongoing support mechanisms that help teachers on the job are also critical. Particular training should include Roma history and culture, conflict resolution, and classroom management. Some countries have also experimented with Roma teachers’ assistants and mediators who can assist in the classroom envi-

ronment and link Roma communities and schools. In Romania, the Ministry of Education has appointed Roma education inspectors in each of its 41 counties to monitor the quality of Roma education.

HEALTH CARE. Relative to the other policy areas, much less is known about the health issues facing Roma communities. This calls out for better monitoring. In particular, more effective observation of communicable diseases such as tuberculosis, hepatitis, and HIV/AIDS is critical. Health services must also be available in isolated Roma communities. Policies that can expand such access to remote rural areas and segregated urban communities include providing incentives for physicians, community health workers, and social

Box 7.4: Desegregation of Roma Schools in Bulgaria: The Vidin Model

In Vidin, the Open Society Institute and the Roma NGO known by the acronym DROM have been collaborating on a innovative program to integrate Roma students into the mainstream school system. Vidin is a town of 85,000 in northwest Bulgaria where 6 percent of the population identified as Roma in the 2001 census. In the 2000-01 school year, 460 students, or half of the school-age students, were integrated into the mainstream school system; more followed in the next school year. Under the project, students are bused from the settlement to school and back and receive supplementary classes at school to help them catch up with their peers. The project involves Roma supervisors who interact with parents and the school to encourage attendance. Low-income students also receive shoes and school lunches; students are given their lunch on the bus to reduce the stigma of receiving it at school.

While preparing the program, DROM went door-to-door in the Roma settlement explaining the project. DROM also sought the support of the schools, the mayor, and the media. The project eventually gained support of all the stakeholders except the mayor, who did agree not to block it. With the agreement of several Roma parents, DROM invited the six mainstream schools in Vidin to participate in a TV program at which each school presented its program, philosophy, and teachers. Roma parents then selected a school for their children. This lessened their concerns and marked the first time that their views had been solicited by the authorities.

At the end of the first semester, the project was a dramatic success, as seen in 100 percent attendance, first-term final-grade averages identical to those of non-Roma pupils, parental and teacher satisfaction, the absence of reported incidents of anti-Roma prejudice, full support from the Regional Directorate of the Ministry of Education, and encouragement to scale-up in other cities. In addition, 35 Roma parents of the bused children themselves returned to school in adult-education programs, and three teenagers who had dropped out in the third grade asked to join the program, prompting teachers to work extra hours with them. On the negative side, 24 pupils received failing grades in one or more subjects, and three left the program. (One returned to the Roma school, and two functionally illiterate eighth graders dropped out.)

The success to date of the program is attributable to three major factors. First, parents feel that their children are protected from prejudice because they are bused and monitored throughout the day by adult Roma; parents also feel that their children can meet the higher scholastic standards. Second, the schools have accepted young adult Roma monitors in the schools who assure that the children are not mistreated. The monitors also follow parental engagement and student participation in extracurricular activities. Moreover, the monitors help the teachers and ease cultural differences. Third, the children are happy to be in schools where real learning takes place. Ongoing assessment of project outcomes will be essential to understand the longer-term implications of the highly encouraging Vidin project. Since the project started in Vidin it has been expanded to seven more cities in Bulgaria.

Source: Open Society Institute.

workers to work with communities to address problems and teach prevention.

Public health interventions can be designed to overcome cultural barriers to care. Some countries have experimented with using Roma mediators to promote health activities within Roma communities and facilitate interactions between Roma and health care professionals—especially around overcoming Roma resistance to such basic care measures as immunizations. Information

campaigns are also critical for addressing many emerging health risks, including substance abuse, sexually transmitted diseases, and conditions associated with poor nutrition and housing. Other initiatives can include better dissemination of public-health information through the media and schools, as well as better coordination with organizations such as churches and Roma NGOs.

Health services need particular attention. Outreach can raise awareness about a range of issues,

Box 7.5: Lessons from US Welfare Reform

During the 1990s, as concerns grew about the increasing number of welfare caseloads, the US government introduced substantial legislative changes in programs designed to assist low-income families. In particular, the federal government granted a growing number of waivers early in the decade, allowing states to experiment with alternative rules for the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) and Food Stamps programs. These changes were followed in 1996 by the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act, which fundamentally changed the public assistance system in the United States. The Act abolished AFDC, which required states to match federal welfare funds, and replaced it with Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), which granted unconditional, fixed amounts of funding to states and allowed them to set their own rules for eligibility and benefits.

In the light of these changes, several states started using “diversions” (one-time assistance, rather than enrollment in ongoing TANF-funded programs) and benefit programs that let recipients keep more public-assistance benefits after returning to work, thus increasing both work incentives and income among low-income families. Some states also worked to transform public assistance offices into employment assistance offices where applicants were given constant incentives to seek and find work. Moreover, several states imposed more penalties on those who did not respond to these work incentives. Finally, individual states spent more money on work-related programs, relative to cash benefits.

To what extent was welfare reform responsible for these trends? To be sure, the US economy enjoyed tremendous prosperity during the 1990s. As a consequence, employment growth was high, unemployment was low, and wages grew significantly among workers of all skill levels since 1996. These factors influenced the welfare of less skilled workers and are therefore important in explaining the trends described above. In fact, between one-third and two-thirds of the caseload change can be attributed to the overall performance of the economy.¹

Unfortunately, a strong economy affects not only poverty but economic policy, which makes it hard to measure the effect of welfare policy changes independently of the business-cycle effect.² But while the overall effect of welfare reform is difficult to pin down, both Canada and the United States have experimented with particularly innovative types of welfare reform programs in ways that permit some form of evaluation.

These programs combined financial incentives with work mandates. In particular, the Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) substantially decreased the benefit-reduction rate for public assistance recipients (thus allowing them to keep more public assistance income when they went to work) while also mandating participation in work/welfare programs. Striking a similar note from north of the US border, Canada’s Self-Sufficient Program (SSP) provided substantial financial support to long-term public assistance recipients who worked 30 hours or more per week. These programs’ results showed that employment, earnings, and family income increased for program participants even as poverty fell.

Although these programs are not money-savers in the short run—indeed, they actually provide more assistance to low-income families than did traditional welfare programs—it is important to consider their long-run effects, particularly since studies of people leaving welfare suggest that most of them (55 to 85 percent) become employed at a future date and about one-half to two-thirds report higher incomes after they get off welfare (Brauner and Loprest 1999).

Continued on next page

including women’s health. Attention to reproductive and family health care issues can help overcome cultural taboos, such as the fear of screening for cervical cancer. Some of the PHARE projects are addressing women’s health issues in different

ways. In the Slovak Republic, for instance, a team of NGOs organized a course on hygiene and child development for Roma mothers. Countries in other regions have launched successful initiatives

Box 7.5 (continued)

Moreover, such programs can be improved through good design. For instance, employment is associated with extra expenses in the form of child care, transportation, and more. So in some states, public support for those items was included as part of their welfare policy, together with health insurance coverage through the Medicaid system.³ At the federal level, the Earned-Income Tax Credit program served a similar function.

In sum, in the US case, a confluence of events seemingly came together—a strong expanding economy, substantial revisions of public-assistance programs that emphasized work and reduced benefit eligibility, and major policy changes that increased the numbers of people returning to work and the subsidies to support work, particularly among vulnerable groups. This seems to have created the right environment for the decline in poverty rates and welfare caseload observed in the data. Moreover, because many of the programs described above rely strongly on the availability of jobs, it is not clear how sustainable these welfare policy changes are in the long run—or how dependent their success has been on a booming US economy. Still, the fact that the SSP managed to succeed despite a Canadian economy that did not do as well as the US in the 1990s shows that programs can work in less favorable environments with high unemployment, if they are designed correctly.

Notes:

1. Different studies provide different measures. See Figlio and Ziliak (1999) and Schoeni and Blank (2000).
2. There is some crude evidence that such changes had a substantial effect on caseloads, but there has been significantly less research relating TANF changes to work behavior or poverty rates. In this respect, the best evidence comes from the fact that participation rates are increasing among vulnerable groups (e.g. single mothers with young children).
3. Most low-skilled jobs do not offer health insurance and this could act as a deterrent for employment.

Sources: World Bank, 2001b; Blank 2000; Peterson 2000; Schoeni and Blank 2000.

for improving women's health through community groups and education.

HOUSING. Because Roma live in such different conditions, housing is a complex sector that requires close coordination between governments and communities. Effective legislation and enforcement mechanisms are needed to prevent housing discrimination and clarify property ownership. In many slum areas and settlements, unresolved questions about building ownership and residency rights have blurred the responsibilities for upgrading and maintenance to the point where no one is responsible. Similar dynamics block incentives for residents to invest in and maintain properties. A UNDP program in Bucharest worked towards legalizing apartments for households in a neighborhood where ownership was not clear. The municipality assumed the management of the properties and let residents apply for rental contracts.

Adequate mechanisms for community involvement and choice are equally important. The legacy of failed housing programs and projects during the socialist era has made this particularly critical, but there are still few experiences from which to draw. Some promising facilities have emerged recently that let communities and households apply for resources for local development projects and better housing, including microcredit arrangements and social funds. Finding out whether these instruments can reach Roma communities will take careful consideration and monitoring.

Measures to alleviate poor conditions in some of the most disadvantaged Roma settlements include: (i) clarifying property rights; (ii) resolving disputes over the ownership of land and buildings that are stopping residents and local governments from investing in and maintaining rundown properties; (iii) simplifying procedures for obtaining building permits to allow residents to upgrade their property; and

(iv) providing clear information to the public on procedures for applying for construction permits and acquiring property.

UTILITIES. Outlying Roma settlements need expanded coverage of utilities and public services. One option would be bringing isolated settlements into mainstream service networks. While inhabitants should still be charged for utilities, subsidies may be needed for low-income households, particularly to cover the cost of public goods such as sanitation. Local governments and communities can be given incentives to provide services in settlements, possibly through a central fund. Finally, opportunities within public works programs can improve basic infrastructure and services in Roma communities.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE. Safety-net programs that provide cash assistance to the poor are an important source of income for many Roma families. Many countries in the region are reforming cash benefits to make them more effective and capable of reaching the poor. Such programs need to meet the needs of poor households without discouraging those who can from working—which would leave them in a “poverty trap,” dependent on social benefits. The Slovak case, in particular, highlighted the perils of this reliance on social benefits.

Work incentives can be built into social assistance programs through time limits, work requirements, and other mechanisms. Benefits should be phased out so that low wage workers—the working poor—will still be entitled to benefits but at a level that will not discourage them from working. This would improve work incentives for those at the margins and increase income among low-income working families. Social workers should also shift their role to act as employment facilitators who can help the unemployed find work. Work-related programs, such as support for child care and transportation subsidies for low-income workers, can also make it easier to find jobs and break the dependency cycle. Lessons from the US welfare reform experience of the 1990s are illustrative (Box 7.5).

CONCLUSIONS

Poverty among Roma remains one of the foremost policy issues for Central and Eastern Europe states as they move towards EU integration and sustained economic development. By going deeper into the nature of Roma communities themselves and providing a more complete picture through both quantitative and qualitative data, this report finds that Roma poverty is a multifaceted problem that can only be addressed by an inclusive approach—involving government, civil society, and other partners—that addresses all dimensions of Roma social exclusion simultaneously. The dominant policy approach since 1989 tended to be the opposite, relying on a fragmented set of projects, often delivered by local NGOs with limited assistance from the state. So the potential to make a difference through a comprehensive change of direction is large and bright.

The current level of activity and interest in Roma issues in Central and Eastern Europe provides a promising start. The next step is to integrate the lessons of these experiences into policy. The mechanisms to facilitate this have been put in place. Most countries have now formulated strategies for improving the conditions of Roma and have built institutions to develop, coordinate, and administer policies and projects. But the road ahead is long and winding. Improvements will not come overnight. Indeed, the debilitating poverty among Roma communities in some West European countries highlights the scope of the challenge for their neighbors to the east. Effective policy responses will require a multilayered approach, involving cross-country partnerships. With sustained leadership, both by Roma themselves and by those who recognize how much Roma can contribute to an enlarging Europe, Roma can look forward with real hope.

NOTES

1. Since 1989, the EU has provided support for Central and Eastern European countries. The main instrument through which this assistance is provided is the PHARE Programme, under the responsibility of the Directorate General for Enlargement. In 1993, PHARE support was reoriented to focus more on the needs of countries

applying for EU membership, including an expansion in support to infrastructure investment. In 1997, PHARE funds were again reoriented to focus entirely on the pre-accession priorities highlighted in each country's Accession Partnership agreements. PHARE funding is distributed as grants.

2. While having a special focus on Roma issues, some of the projects are not targeted solely at Roma, and may include other ethnic minorities or disadvantaged groups. As a result, these figures do not represent the amount spent exclusively in support of Roma. For a more detailed breakdown of PHARE-funding for Roma by sector and project title, for Bulgaria, the Czech

Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia, see European Commission 2002.

3. The EIDHR is managed by the Directorate General for External Relations. For more information on the EIDHR and its projects, see http://europa.eu.int/comm./europeaid/projects/ddh_en.htm.

4. The Socrates and Youth Programmes are managed by the Directorate General for Education and Culture. For more information on the Socrates Programme <http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/socrates.html> and for the Youth Programmes see <http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/youth.html>.

REFERENCES

- Ainscow, M. and Memmenasha, H.-G., 1998. "The Education of Children with Special Needs: Barriers and Opportunities in Central and Eastern Europe," Innocenti Occasional Paper No. 67, UNICEF-ICDC: Florence, Italy.
- Allison, C. and Ringold, D. 1996. "Labor Markets in Transition in Central and Eastern Europe: 1989–1995." World Bank Technical Paper No. 352. Washington, D.C.
- Asociación Secretariado General Gitano (ASGG). 2000. *Proyecto ACCEDER: Informe Final, Acceder integra*. Madrid, Spain: ASGG.
- Asociación Secretariado General Gitano (ASGG). 2001. *The Roma Community in Spain and Slovakia: A Guide to Action Strategies*. Madrid, Spain: ASGG and Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores.
- Bárány, Z. 2000. "The Poverty of Gypsy Studies." *NewsNet: The Newsletter of the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies* 40(3).
- Bárány, Z. 2002. *The East European Gypsies: Regime Change, Marginality and Ethnopolitics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Blanchard, O., et al. 1995. *Spanish Unemployment: Is There a Solution?* London: CEPR.
- Basurto, P. 1995. Children: Victims and Symbols. In *Children of Minorities: Deprivation and Discrimination*. Innocenti Insights Series. Florence, Italy: UNICEF International Child Development Centre.
- Beck, S. 1984. "Ethnicity, Class and Public Policy: Tsiganii/Gypsies in Socialist Romania." In Kot Shangriladze and Erica Townsend, eds., *Papers for the Fifth Congress of Southeast European Studies* (Belgrade, September 1984). Columbus, OH: Slavica Publishers.
- Beck, S. 1985. "The Romanian Gypsy Problem." In Joanne Grumet, ed., *Papers From the Fourth and Fifth Annual Meeting of the Gypsy Lore Society*, North American Chapter. New York: Gypsy Lore Society.
- Beck, S. 1989. "The Origins of Gypsy Slavery in Romania." *Dialectical Anthropology* 14 (April 1989): 53–61.
- Blank, R. M. 2000. "Fighting Poverty: Lessons from Recent US History." *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, vol. 12, No. 2, Spring 2000.
- Brauner, S. and Loprest, P. 1999. "Where are they Now? What State's Studies of People Who Left Welfare Tell Us." Washington, DC: The Urban Institute.
- Cahn, C. 2001. "Smoke and Mirrors: Roma and Minority Policy in Hungary." *Roma Rights* 4. European Roma Rights Center. http://www.errc.org/rr_nr4_2001/noteb6.shtml
- Calvo B, T. 1989. *Los racistas son los otros: Roma, minorías y derechos humanos en los textos escolares*. Madrid: Editorial Popular.
- Cartner, H. 1994. "Romanian Lynch Law: Violence Against Roma in Romania." *Human Rights Watch Newsletter*, November 1. New York: Human Rights Watch.
- CEDIME-SE. 2001. *Minorities in Southeast Europe: Roma of Romania*. Report prepared by the Center for Documentation and Information on Minorities in Eastern Europe—Southeast Europe (CEDIME-SE) in cooperation with the Ethnocultural Diversity Resource Center (EDRC). Cluj, Romania: CEDIME-SE/EDRC.
- CIDE 1999. *Las desigualdades en la educación en España*. Madrid, Spain: Ministerio de Educación y Cultura, Centro de Investigación y Documentación Educativa.
- Center for Reproductive Rights, 2003. "Body and Soul: Forced Sterilization and other Assaults on Roma Reproductive Freedom in Slovakia." New York.

- Cilla G., Perez-Trallero E., Marimon J.M., Erdozain S., and Gutierrez C. 1995. "Prevalence of Hepatitis A Antibody among Disadvantaged Gypsy People in Northern Spain." *Epidemiology and Infection* 115: 157–61.
- Commander, S. and Coricelli, F., eds. 1995. *Unemployment, Restructuring and the Labor Market in Eastern Europe and Russia*. Washington, D.C.: The World Bank.
- Commission of the European Communities. 2000. *2000 Regular Report from the Commission on Hungary's Progress*. Brussels, Belgium. http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/report_11_00/pdf/en/hu_en.pdf.
- Commission of the European Communities. 2001. *2001 Regular Report from the Commission on Hungary's Progress Toward Accession*. SEC (2001) 1748, Brussels, Belgium: Commission. http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/report2001/hu_en.pdf.
- Commission of the European Communities. 2002. *2002 Regular Report from the Commission on Hungary's Progress Toward Accession*, SEC (2002) 1404, Brussels, Belgium: Commission.
- Conclusions of the Copenhagen European Council. 1993. *Bulletin of the European Communities* 6, point I.13.
- Congress of Deputies. 1999a. *Informe de la Subcomisión, creada en el seno de la Comisión de Política Social y empleo, para el estudio de la problemática del pueblo gitano*. Madrid, Spain: Congreso de los Diputados, Comisión de Política Social y Empleo (December).
- Congress of Deputies. 1999b. *Informe de la Subcomisión para el estudio de la problemática del pueblo Gitano*. Madrid, Spain: Congreso de los Diputados, Comisión de Política Social y Empleo.
- Council of Europe. 1995. *Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities*. European Treaty Series 157 (1.II.1995). Strasbourg: Council of Europe.
- Council of Europe. 2002. *Legal Situation of the Roma in Europe*. Document 9397 (26 March). <http://assembly.coe.int/Documents/WorkingDocs/doc02/EDOC9397.htm>.
- Crowe, D. 1991. "The Gypsy Historical Experience in Romania." In David Crowe and John Holsti, eds., *The Gypsies of Eastern Europe*. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, Inc.
- Crowe, D. 1994. *A History of the Gypsies of Eastern Europe and Russia*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Dar, A. and Tzannatos, Z. 1998. "Active Labor Market Programs: A Review of the Evidence from Evaluations." Washington, D.C.: The World Bank.
- Denkov, D., Stanoeva, E., Vidinsky, V. 2001. "Roma Schools," Open Society Institute: Sofia, Bulgaria.
- De Witte, B. 2002. "Politics versus Law in the EU's Approach to Ethnic Minorities." In J. Zielonka, ed., *Europe Unbound: Enlarging and Reshaping the Boundaries of the European Union*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Dunai, M. 2002. "Political Battles Heat Up in Hungary." *Time Europe Daily* (February 15). <http://www.time.com/time/europe/eu/daily/0,13716,203284,00.html>
- The Economist. 2001. "Europe's Spectral Nation." *The Economist* (May 10, 2001).
- Erlanger, S. 2000. "The Gypsies of the Slovak Republic: Despised and Despairing." *The New York Times* (April 3): A10.
- Esman, M. 2001. "Policy Dimensions: What Can Development Assistance Do?" In Ronald J. Herring and Milton J. Esman, eds. *Carrots, Sticks, and Ethnic Conflict: Rethinking Development Assistance*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- European Centre on Health of Societies in Transition (ECOHST). 2000. "Health Needs of the Roma Population in the Czech and the Slovak Republics: Literature Review." Draft.
- European Commission, Directorate General for Enlargement. 1999. *EU Support for Roma Communities in Central and Eastern Europe—Enlargement Briefing*. European Commission DG Enlargement, Enlargement Information Unit.
- European Commission, Directorate General for Enlargement. 2002. *EU Support for Roma Communities in Central and Eastern Europe—Enlargement Briefing, May 2002*. European Commission DG Enlargement, Enlargement Information Unit. <http://europa.eu.int/>

- comm/enlargement/docs/pdf/brochure_roma_may2002.pdf
- European Committee on Romani Emancipation (ECRE). 2001. "The Social and Economic Inclusion of the Roma—Annual Progress Report." Document ECRE (2001) 003, Brussels, 20 October. <http://www.romaniworld.com/ec0103a.htm>
- European Roma Rights Center (ERRC). 1996. *Sudden Rage at Dawn: Violence Against Roma in Romania*. Budapest: European Roma Rights Center.
- European Roma Rights Center (ERRC). 1999. "A Special Remedy: Roma and Schools for the Mentally Handicapped in the Czech Republic." Country Reports Series 8. Budapest: European Roma Rights Center.
- European Roma Rights Center (ERRC). 2000. "Campland: Racial Segregation of Roma in Italy." Country Reports Series 9. Budapest: European Roma Rights Center.
- Figlio, D. and Ziliak, J. 1999. "Welfare Reform, the Business Cycle, and the Decline in AFDC Caseloads," in *Economic Conditions and Welfare Reform*, ed. S. Danziger, Kalamazoo, MI: Upjohn Institute for Employment Research, 17–48.
- Fraser, A. 1995. *The Gypsies*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Fresno, J.M. 1994. *Análisis socioantropológico sobre la situación actual de la Comunidad Gitana en Espana*. Documentos Técnicos 2, Madrid: Asociación Secretariado General Gitano.
- Galloway, R., Rokx, C. and Brown, L. 2000. "Nutrition Status and Issues in ECA." The World Bank: Washington D.C. Draft.
- Gamella, J. F. 1996. *La Población Gitana en Andalucía: Un Estudio Exploratorio de Sus Condiciones de Vida*. Sevilla, Spain: Consejería de Trabajo y Asuntos Sociales, Junta de Andalucía.
- Gheorghe, Nicolae. 1983. "The origin of Roma's slavery in the Romanian principalities," *Roma*, 7(1):12-27.
- Gilberg, T. 1974. "Ethnic Minorities in Romania Under Socialism." *East European Quarterly* 7 (January): 435–464.
- Giménez Adelantado, A. 1999. "Contexto socio-político y cultural: los españoles Roma." *Roma* 1 (June). Biannual magazine of the ASGG (Asociación Secretariado General Gitano).
- Goldston, J. and R. Guglielmo. 2001. "Shared Standards." *Transitions On-Line* (October 11).
- Government of Romania, Ministry of Public Information. 2001. *Strategy of the Government of Romania for Improving the Condition of Roma*, 430/2001. Bucharest, Romania: Ministry of Public Information.
- Hancock, I. 1997. "The Struggle for the Control of Identity." *Transitions* 4 (4/September).
- Havas, G., Kémeny I., and Lisko, I. 2001. *Segregation in the Education of Roma Children*. Final Research Study, 2nd draft. Budapest: MNEKK, OM, Soros Foundation, OTKA.
- Iliev, I. 1999. "Some Approaches at Measuring Social Capital among Roma Communities in Bulgaria: Preliminary Notes." Draft. Implementation Report. 1999. *Implementation of the Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities*, Government Resolution 2023/1999 (II. 12.). Budapest, Hungary: Office for Ethnic and National Minorities. <http://www.meh.hu/nekh/Angol/4-1.htm>
- Jenkins, R. 1999. "The Role of the Hungarian NGO Sector in Postcommunist Social Policy." In Linda J. Cook, Mitchell A. Orenstein, and Marilyn Rueschemeyer, eds., *Left Parties and Social Policy in Postcommunist Europe*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Jiménez González, N. 1993. "Schooling of Gypsy Infancy in Spain." Paper presented at the Seminar on "Integration and Education of Gypsy Children," Snekkersten and Elsinore, Denmark.
- Kabachieva, P. and Iliev, I. 2002. "Background Paper for the World Bank Bulgaria Poverty Assessment." Unpublished. Sofia, Bulgaria: The World Bank.
- Kádár, A., Farkas, L. and Pardavi, M. 2002. *Hungary: A Comparison of the EU Racial Equality Directive and Protocol 12 with National Anti-Discrimination Legislation*. Brussels: ERRC, Interights & MPG.
- Kalibova, K. 2000. "The Demographic Characteristics of Roma/Gypsies in Selected Countries in Central and Eastern Europe." In W. Haug,

- P. Compton, and Y. Courgage, *The Demographic Characteristics of National Minorities in Certain European States*. Population Study 31, Vol. 2. Council of Europe Publishing.
- Kállai, E. 2000. "The Roma and Research on the Roma." In *Caught in the Trap of Integration: Roma Problems and Prospects in Hungary*. International Conference, Budapest 22–23 June 1999, Budapest: Bureau for European Comparative Minority Research.
- Kállai, E. and Törzsök, E. eds. 2000. *A Roma's Life in Hungary*. Budapest: Bureau for European Comparative Minority Research
- Keating, M. and McGarry, J. 2001. *Minority Nationalism and the Changing International Order*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Kémeny, I., Havas, G., and Kertesi, G. 1994. "The Education and Employment Situation of the Gypsy Community: Report of the 1993/4 National Sample Survey." Working Paper 17. Budapest, Hungary: ILO/Japan Project on Employment Policies for Transition in Hungary.
- Kertesi, G. 1994. "The Labor Market Situation of the Gypsy Minority in Hungary." Working Paper 14. Budapest, Hungary: ILO/Japan Project on Employment Policies for Transition in Hungary.
- Konstantinov, Y. 1999. "Case Study of Roma Heroin Users: Maksouda Quarter, Varna." Background Paper for the Bulgaria Consultations with the Poor Study. Unpublished .
- Kováts, M. 2001a. "The Emergence of European Roma Policy." In Will Guy, ed. *Between Past and Future: the Roma of Central and Eastern Europe*. Hertfordshire: University of Hertfordshire Press.
- Kováts, M., 2001b. "The Political Significance of the First National Gypsy Self-Government." *Journal on Ethnopolitics and Minority Issues in Europe* (Autumn). European Center for Minority Issues. <http://www.ecmi.de>
- Ládanyi, J. 1993. "Patterns of Residential Segregation and the Gypsy Minority in Budapest." *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 17(1): 30–41.
- Ládanyi, J. and Szelényi, I. 2001. "The Social Construction of Roma Ethnicity in Bulgaria, Romania and Hungary During Market Transition." *Review of Sociology* 7 (2): 79–89.
- Lewy, G. 2000. *The Nazi Persecution of the Gypsies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Liegeois, Jean-Pierre. 1994. *Roma, Gypsies, Travellers*. Strasbourg : Council of Europe Press,.
- Liegeois, J-P. and N. Gheorghe. 1995. *Roma/Gypsies: A European Minority*. London: Minority Rights Group.
- Livezeanu, I. 1995. *Cultural Politics in Greater Romania: Regionalism, Nation-Building, Ethnic Struggle 1918–1930*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Loury, G.C., 1999. "Social Exclusion and Ethnic Groups: The Challenge to Economics." Paper presented to the Annual Bank Conference on Development Economics, World Bank, Washington D.C., mimeo.
- Lovatt, C. and Lovatt, D. 2001. "News from Romania: Hungarian Status Bill." *Central Europe Review* 3(18/21 May). <http://www.ce-review.org>
- Macura, V. and Petrovic, M. 1999. "Housing, Urban Planning and Poverty: Problems Faced by Roma/Gypsy Communities with Particular Reference to Central and Eastern Europe." Document of the Council of Europe, MG-S-Rom (99) 1.
- Marko, J. 2000. "Equality and Difference: Political and Legal Aspects of Ethnic Group Relations" In F. Matscher, ed., *Vienna International Encounter on Some Current Issues Regarding the Situation of National Minorities*. Kehl: Engel Publishers: Kehl 1997: 67–97. Web version published 2000.
- Martín, F.A. 2000. "Roma in Spain," Background paper prepared for the World Bank. Unpublished.
- Martinez-Frais, M.L. and E. Bermejo. 1992. "Prevalence of Congenital Anomaly Syndromes in the Spanish Gypsy Population." *Journal of Medical Genetics* 29: 483–6.
- Marx, K. 1985 *The Communist Manifesto*. Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books.
- Ministerio de Trabajo y Asuntos Sociales. 1999. Secretaría General de Asuntos Sociales, Dirección General de Acción Social, del Menor y de la Familia, "Programa Para el Desarrollo del

- Pueblo Gitano." March. Madrid, Spain: Ministerio de Trabajo y Asuntos Sociales.
- Ministerio de Trabajo y Asuntos Sociales. 2000. Servicio Programa de Desarrollo Gitano, Memoria del Programa de Desarrollo Gitano 1988. Madrid, Spain: Ministerio de Trabajo y Asuntos Sociales.
- Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic. 1997. "Conceptual Intents of the Government of the Slovak Republic for Solution of the Problems of Romany Population under Current Social and Economic Conditions." Bratislava.
- Minorities Act. 1993. *Act LXXVII of 1993 on the Rights of National and Ethnic Minorities*. Budapest: National Assembly, Republic of Hungary. http://www.riga.lv/minelres/NationalLegislation/Hungary/Hungary_Minorities_English.htm
- Murray, R., ed. 2002. *Improving the Roma Situation: Successful Projects from Romania...and Lessons Learned*. Bucharest, Romania: European Commission, EU PHARE Programme RO9803.01.
- Nord, M. 1988. "Poor People on the Move: Country-to-Country Migration and the Spatial Concentration of Poverty." *Journal of Regional Science* 38: 329–352.
- Open Society Institute (OSI). 2001. *Monitoring the EU Accession Process: Minority Protection—Country Reports on Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia*. Budapest: Central European University Press.
- Open Society Institute (OSI). 2002. *Monitoring the EU Accession Process: Minority Protection*. Vols. I and II. OSI EU Accession Monitoring Program. Budapest, Hungary.
- Open Society Institute (OSI). 2002. *Research on Selected Roma Education Programs in Central and Eastern Europe: Final Report*. Hungary, Budapest: Education Sub-Board of the Open Society Institute. http://www.osi.hu/iep/equity/roma_report_part1.pdf
- Orentlicher, D. F. 1998. "Citizenship and National Identity." In David Wippman, ed. *International Law and Ethnic Conflict*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press: 296–325.
- Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE ODIHR). 1996. *Situation of Roma and Sinti in the OSCE Region: Background Material for the Review Conference*. Warsaw: ODIHR.
- Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE ODIHR). 1997. *ODIHR Background Report, OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting, November 12–28*.
- Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, High Commissioner on National Minorities (OSCE). 2000. "Report on the Situation of Roma and Sinti in the OSCE Area." The Hague: OSCE.
- Orsós, Hegyesi, E., Bóhn, K., Fleck, G., and A. Imre. 2000. "Alternative Schools and Roma Education: A Review of Alternative Secondary School Models for the Education of Roma Children in Hungary." World Bank Regional Office Hungary, NGO Studies No. 3.
- Pace, E. 1993. "The Making of Minorities." In Sandro Costarelli, ed., *Children of Minorities: Gypsies*. Innocenti Insights Series. Florence, Italy: UNICEF International Child Development Centre.
- Panaitecu, P.N. 1941. "The Gypsies in Wallachia and Moldavia: A Chapter of Economic History." Translated by Doris Hardman. *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society* 20 (2/April/Third Series): 58–72.
- Pejic, J. 1997. "Minority Rights in International Law." *Human Rights Quarterly* 19 (3): 666–685.
- Peterson, J. 2000. "Welfare Reform and Inequality: The TANF and UI Programs." *Journal of Economic Issues*, vol. 34, No. 2, June 2000.
- Pogany, I. 1999. "Minority Rights in Central and Eastern Europe: Old Dilemmas, New Solutions?" In Deirdre Fottrell and Bill Bowring, eds., *Minority and Group Rights in the New Millennium*. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers.
- Poulton, H. 1991. *The Balkans: Minorities and States in Conflict*. London: Minority Rights Group.
- Project on Ethnic Relations (PER). 1997a. "The Roma in the Twenty-First Century: A Policy

- Paper." Princeton, NJ: Project on Ethnic Relations.
- Project on Ethnic Relations (PER). 1997b. "The Media and the Roma in Contemporary Europe: Facts and Fictions." Princeton, NJ: Project on Ethnic Relations.
- Project on Ethnic Relations (PER). 1998. *Self-Government in Hungary: The Gypsy/Romani Experience and Prospects for the Future* (May 9–11 1997). Budapest, Hungary: Project on Ethnic Relations.
- Psacharopoulos G. and Patrinos, H. A. 1994. "Indigenous People and Poverty in Latin America: An Empirical Analysis." Washington, DC: The World Bank.
- Puporka L. and Z. Zádori. 1999. "The Health Status of Roma in Hungary." Budapest, Hungary: World Bank Regional Office Hungary, NGO Studies, No 2.
- Radó, P. 1997. *Report on the Education of Roma Students in Hungary*. Expert Study for the Office of National and Ethnic Minorities (ONEM), Budapest, Hungary: ONEM and the OSI Institute for Educational Policy.
- Radó, Peter. 2001. "Roma Education Policies in Hungary", in Christina McDonald, Judit Kovacs, Csaba Fenyes eds., *The Roma Education Resource Book*, Budapest: Open Society Institute.
- Ravallion, M. 1993. *Poverty Comparisons*. Philadelphia: Harvard Academic Publishers.
- Revenge, A., Ringold, D. and Tracy, W.M. 2002. "Poverty and Ethnicity: A Cross-Country Study of Roma Poverty in Central Europe". Washington, DC: The World Bank.
- Ringold, D. 2000. "Roma and the Transition in Central and Eastern Europe." Washington, DC: The World Bank.
- Rodgers, G, Gore, C. and Figueiredo, J. 1995. *Social Exclusion: Rhetoric, Reality, Responses*. Geneva, Switzerland: International Institute for Labor Studies, United Nations Development Programme.
- Roma. 2000. "El pueblo Gitano y la educación." *Roma* number 7/8, December 2000, Biannual Magazine of the General Gypsy Secretariat Association (ASGG).
- Rona, S. and Lee, L. 2001. "School Success for Roma Children: Step by Step Special Schools Initiative Interim Report." Open Society Institute.
- Rughinis, C. 2000. "Romania: Local Service Delivery Module on Roma Communities." Background paper prepared for the World Bank.
- Sanchez-Paramo, C. 2001. "Unemployment, Skills, and Incentives. An Overview of the Safety Net System in the Slovak Republic." Washington, DC: The World Bank.
- Santos, Montserrat. 1999. "Cultural Diversity: Equal Opportunities?" *European Journal of Education* 34 (4/December): 437–448.
- Save the Children. 2001a. *Denied a Future: the Right to Education of Roma/Gypsy and Traveller Children in Europe*. Volume 1: South-Eastern Europe. London, UK: Save the Children Fund.
- Save the Children. 2001b. *Denied a Future? The Right to Education of Roma/Gypsy & Traveller Children in Europe*. Vol. 2: Western & Central Europe. London, UK: Save the Children Fund.
- Schafft, K. 1999. "Local Minority Self-Governance and Hungary's Roma." *The Hungarian Quarterly* XL (155/Autumn). <http://www.hungary.com/hungq/no155/>
- Schafft, K. and D. Brown. 2000. "Social Capital and Grassroots Development: The Case of Roma Self-Governance in Hungary." *Social Problems* 47 (2): 201–219.
- Schafft, K. and D. Brown. 2002. "Social Capital, Social Networks, and Social Power." Paper prepared for the Cornell University Workshop on Social Capital and Civic Involvement, Ithaca, NY, September 13–14.
- Schoeni, R. F. and Blank, R. M. 2000. "What Has Welfare Reform Accomplished? Impacts on Welfare Participation, Employment, Income, Poverty and Family Structure." NBER Working Paper, No. 7627.
- Shuinéar, S. 1993. Growing Up as a Gypsy: Insights from the October 1992 UNICEF ICDC Workshop. In Sandro Costarelli, ed., *Children of Minorities: Gypsies*. Innocenti Insights Series. Florence, Italy: UNICEF International Child Development Centre.

- Silver, H., 1994. "Social Exclusion and Social Solidarity: Three Paradigms." *International Labor Review* 133 (5–6): 531–578.
- Staines, V. 1999. "A Health Sector Strategy for the Europe and Central Asia Region." Human Development Network. Washington, DC: The World Bank.
- Stewart, M. 1997. *The Time of the Gypsies*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Tanaka, J. Bíró, A. Gheorghe, N., Heuss, H., 1998. "Toward a *Pakiv* European Roma Fund: Income Generating Programmes for Roma in Central and Eastern Europe." Report commissioned by the Council of Europe and Freudenberg Foundation. MG-S-ROM (98) 10. Council of Europe: Strasbourg.
- Tomova, I. 1998. "Ethnic Dimensions of the Poverty in Bulgaria." Report Commissioned for the Bulgaria Social Assessment. Sofia, Bulgaria: The World Bank.
- Tomova, I. 2000. "Fiscal Decentralization: Ethnicity Module." Unpublished draft. Sofia, Bulgaria: The World Bank.
- Ulč, O. 1991. "Integration of the Gypsies in Czechoslovakia." *Ethnic Groups* 9: 107–117.
- United Nations (UN). 2001. *Joint UN/Romanian Government Seminar on the Improvement of the Situation of the Roma in Romania*. Summary of Seminar Proceedings, 2–3 November. Bucharest, Romania: The Senate of Romania. <http://www.un.ro/English.pdf>.
- United Nations Development Program (UNDP). 1999. *National Human Development Report: Bulgaria 1999*. Sofia, Bulgaria: UNDP.
- United Nations Development Program (UNDP). 2003. *The Roma in Central and Eastern Europe: Avoiding the Dependency Trap*. Bratislava, Slovakia: UNDP.
- UNICEF. 1995. *Children of Minorities: Deprivation and Discrimination*. Innocenti Insights Series. Florence, Italy: UNICEF International Child Development Centre.
- UNICEF. 1997. Children at Risk in Central and Eastern Europe: Perils and Promises. Regional Monitoring Reports 4. Florence, Italy: UNICEF International Child Development Centre.
- UNICEF. 1998. *Education for All? Regional Monitoring Reports 5*. Florence, Italy: UNICEF International Child Development Centre.
- UNICEF. 1999. *Women in Transition*, Regional Monitoring Reports 6. Florence, Italy: UNICEF International Child Development Centre.
- Van der Walle, D. And Gunewardena, D. 2001. "Source of Ethnic Inequality in Viet Nam." *Journal of Development Economics* 65: 177–207.
- Vašečka, M. 1999. "The Roma." Bratislava: Institute for Public Affairs.
- Vašečka, M. 2000a. "Analysis of the Situation of Roma in Slovakia." Draft prepared for the World Bank.
- Vašečka, M. 2000b. "Roma—The Greatest Challenge for Slovakia on its Way into the European Union." Bratislava: Institute for Public Affairs.
- Vásquez, J.M. 1980. *Estudio sociológico sobre los Roma españoles*. Madrid: Instituto de Sociología Aplicada.
- Villareal, F. 2001. "Spanish Policy and Roma." *ERRC Notebook 2*. European Roma Rights Center. [http://www.errc.org/rr_nr2-3_2001/ noteb2.shtml](http://www.errc.org/rr_nr2-3_2001/noteb2.shtml)
- Walsh, N. 2000. "Minority Self Government in Hungary: Legislation and Practice." *Journal on Ethnopolitics and Minority Issues in Europe* (Summer). European Center for Minority Issues, Germany. <http://www.ecmi.de>
- Wheeler, A. 1999. "Gypsies in Eastern Europe—Issues and Possible Actions." Draft Discussion Paper. Washington, DC: The World Bank.
- Wippman, D. 1998. "Introduction." In David Wippman, ed. *International Law and Ethnic Conflict*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press: 86–111.
- World Bank. 2000a "Balancing Protection and Opportunity: ECA Social Protection Strategy Paper," Washington, D.C.: The World Bank.
- World Bank, 2000b. *Making Transition Work for Everyone: Poverty and Inequality in Europe and Central Asia*. Washington, DC: The World Bank.
- World Bank. 2000c. "The Road to Stability and Prosperity in South Eastern Europe: A

- Regional Strategy Paper." Washington, DC: The World Bank.
- World Bank. 2000d. *Romania Local Social Services Delivery Study*. Volumes I and II. Washington, DC: World Bank Human Development Sector Unit, Europe and Asia Region. Report No. 23492-RO.
- World Bank. 2001a. *Attacking Poverty: World Development Report 2000/2001*. Washington, DC: The World Bank.
- World Bank. 2001b. "Slovak Republic: Living Standards, Employment and Labour Market Study." Report 22351-SK. The World Bank: Washington, D.C.
- World Bank, 2002. "Poverty and Welfare of Roma in the Slovak Republic." Washington, DC: The World Bank.
- World Bank, Foundation SPACE, INEKO, the Open Society Institute. 2002. "Poverty and Welfare of Roma in the Slovak Republic." Bratislava.
- World Bank and National Commission for Statistics. 1998. *From Poverty to Rural Development*.
- Zamfir E. and Zamfir C. 1993a. *Gypsies: Between Ignoring them and Worrying About Them*. Bucharest, Romania: Editura Alternative.
- Zamfir, E. and Zamfir, C. 1993b. "The Romany Population." Social Policy Series 8. Bucharest, Romania: Bucharest University and the Institute for the Quality of Life.
- Zamfir and Zamfir. 1996. "Children at Risk in Romania: Problems Old and New." Florence, Italy: Unicef Child Development Center.
- Zang, T. and R. Levy. 1991. *Destroying Ethnic Identity: The Persecution of Gypsies in Romania*. New York: Helsinki Watch.



THE WORLD BANK GROUP

1818 H Street, NW
Washington, DC 20433 USA
Telephone: 202 473-1000
Internet: www.worldbank.org
E-mail: roma@worldbank.org

Roma have suffered from severe poverty and exclusion throughout European history. For many Roma in Central and Eastern Europe, the period of transition from communism has been especially dire. Low education and skill levels, compounded by discrimination, have led to widespread long-term unemployment and deteriorating living conditions.

Their plight has not gone unnoticed. Over the past decade, governments, civil society and the international community have actively supported initiatives to keep Roma children in school, expand access to jobs, and overcome discrimination. Lessons from these projects can make policies more inclusive and can expand their reach.

This volume was prepared for the conference “Roma in an Expanding Europe: Challenges for the Future” in Budapest, Hungary, June 30–July 1, 2003. I hope that this conference will catalyze an ongoing dialogue between the new Roma leadership and the wider policy community that will improve the living conditions and future opportunities of Roma over the long term.

From the foreword by
James D. Wolfensohn, President,
The World Bank