

# Roma Empowerment and Support for Inclusion

Case Study

Rome, Italy



INTERNATIONAL  
STEP by STEP  
ASSOCIATION



**Bernard  
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“I also have a tomorrow and can be somebody”  
*(Roma Facilitator, Rome)*



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

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<b>PURPOSE OF THE CASE STUDY</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>CONTEXT</b>	<b>4</b>
What is the government response?	6
<b>STRATEGIES EMPLOYED</b>	<b>6</b>
Multilevel action	7
Direct action with children and families	7
How did the project teams intervene?	9
<b>CHALLENGES</b>	<b>10</b>
Very poor living conditions	10
Hostile public opinion	10
Lack of political will and political instability	11
Fragmentation and conflict among the civil society organizations	11
<b>OUTCOMES</b>	<b>12</b>
Children's access to quality childhood services	12
Influencing public awareness on Roma inclusion and early development	13
<b>LESSONS LEARNED</b>	<b>14</b>
Participation and active involvement of Roma actors	14
Multilevel lobby and advocacy	14
Building local alliances	14
Housing and access to services is key for inclusion and for early childhood	15
No social inclusion plan can succeed as long as camps are legal	15
Moving from a project-based thinking to a long term vision on social inclusion	15

<b>MONITORING AND EVALUATION</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>SCALABILITY AND SUSTAINABILITY</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLICY AND PRACTICE</b>	<b>17</b>
Appendix 1 - Project partners	19
Appendix 2 – Policy and decision makers reached by the project advocacy activities	20
Appendix 3 – Examples of advocacy activities	22

## PURPOSE OF THE CASE STUDY

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The present case study is aimed at providing an accessible narrative to share promising practices and lessons learned with other actors active in the field of Roma inclusion, with a specific focus on early years. This case study is developed based on the information provided by the implementing partners and on the data collected during visits in countries. The project funded by the Bernard van Leer Foundation was carried out by Associazione 21 Luglio Onlus and ABCittà società cooperativa sociale ONLUS between 2012-2015, focussing on Roma communities and residents within the City of Rome in Italy.

## CONTEXT

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It is estimated that some 40,000 Roma people live in substandard conditions in Italy. Of these, about 9,000 live in Rome and almost half of them (4,744 including 2,200 children aged 3-16) live in authorized camps (official slums in all but name) in the city .

*“Being a woman and being Roma, I wasn’t ONLY example to the women but mostly I represented an example for the younger children. My presence was an input, I think it was a stimulus for them to say: ‘I also have a tomorrow and I can be somebody.’”*  
(Roma facilitator)

The camps are generally located far away from any basic facilities or transport links. They are enclosed by fences or walls so access is restricted and movement in and out is monitored and controlled through checks at the entrance. Once inside, the living conditions are appalling. Accommodation is inadequate and not insulated from heat or cold. There are no health or education facilities, or anywhere for rest or recreation.

Children living in these conditions develop “ghetto pathologies”, including respiratory problems, skin conditions, hyperactivity, learning disorders. There is high incidence of early childhood diseases because of the lack of healthcare for children aged 0-3. Older children have no easy access to education and no place to play or enjoy sports.

In recent years, the Municipality of Rome has funded social cooperatives to provide a transport service between the settlements and the schools to improve school attendance and attainment. However, the results of this investment have been disappointing.

A recent report , published by Associazione 21 luglio Onlus in April 2016 and dealing with the schooling policies adopted by the Municipality of Rome between 2009/2010 and 2014/2015 school years, shows that attendance and attainment of Roma children remains very poor. Despite an investment of around 2 million euros per year from the Municipality and enrolment of 1800 Roma children in school, 20% never showed up in class at all, and only 11%

attended at least 75% of school hours. As a result, 90% of Roma children enrolled for school were not included in end year performance assessment because their attendance was too low. Whether due to poor attendance or other factors as well, the research found that Roma children struggled to keep up with their peers, 50% fell behind and were ending up in classes intended for younger age groups.

The study found a direct causal link between the very poor living conditions in the camps and the children's failure to access education or benefit fully from it. For example, the lack of adequate water and sanitation systems in the camps, made it very hard to appear neat and tidy for classes, and children had no suitable place to do their homework or any educated adult to help them. Living in remote and segregated camps also had an impact. The children's isolation from mainstream society and their lack of exposure to Italian language or culture, meant that teachers tended to adapt and simplify the curriculum for them leading to parallel course programmes. And the timing of the special bus service provided for Roma children to come to school meant that they missed the first and last hour of every school day. No surprise therefore, that many Roma students fell behind.

However, it was not only a question of practical difficulties. The enormous cultural gap between Roma and mainstream Italian society also played a big part. Roma children find it hard to see the relevance of formal education to their lives and experience. In their communities, economic and social success are unrelated to literacy or formal qualifications. And when they get into the classroom, they see that they are treated differently from other children, seen as inferior, taught separately, using materials which seem irrelevant to their lives. Finally, they see that their fellow students don't want to be with them, because of the bad reputation of Roma communities and the fear that any physical contact with them will lead to disease or contamination.

This is the situation of children in the authorized settlements. However, another 2000 – 2500 people (of whom 50% are children) live in informal camps in Rome, in even worse conditions. These settlements, commonly called “illegal” or “un-authorized”, are usually set up along roads, in open spaces or in abandoned building that are temporary occupied. The people in these informal settlements suffer filthy and squalid living conditions, with no basic infrastructure. They are forced to move again and again by the police but are not offered any alternative housing solutions. It is impossible for the children to access education on any regular basis, and they suffer major psychological distress due to their very poor living conditions and the frequent forced evictions.

## What is the government's response?

In February 2012, following the invitation of the European Commission, the Italian Government adopted the National Roma Integration Strategy (NRIS) intended to put an end to the emergency measures in place until that time i.e. the so-called “Nomad Emergency” resolutions put in practice since 2008 in the regions Campania, Lazio, Lombardy, Veneto and Piedmont. The document would replace these with a set of integrated policies focusing on four pillars (Housing, Employment, Education and Health), and make a formal commitment towards Roma and Sinti social inclusion across all Regions. It strongly condemns the “camp system” for accommodating Roma in Italy; and presses for the adoption of an inclusive, participatory and human rights based approach.

Four years after its adoption, the Strategy has yet to be implemented and there has been no observable improvement in the living conditions of Roma and Sinti families on the ground. However, after almost 4 years of continuous advocacy work with decision makers, a cultural change has occurred and the “closure of Roma camps” has become a recurring theme among decision makers and public opinion. In March this year, the Lazio region finally launched a Regional Table for Roma inclusion and integration with separate groups covering the four pillars. Associazione 21 luglio coordinates the table on housing and participates in the one on education. So far, the tables have met three times. The current climate represents an important opportunity to address the situation which should be seized before it melts away.

**STRATEGIES EMPLOYED** For any intervention to be successful against this background, it needed to tackle underlying issues. The discrimination, segregation and exclusion of Roma communities and, the lack of pro-active solutions aimed at their social inclusion were compounded by Roma ignorance of their own and their children's rights, their low involvement in projects addressed to them and the lack of access to essential services and information. And added to all of this, was the lack of knowledge and understanding of Roma, among non-Roma general public opinion and decision makers.

## Multilevel action

The response needed to be integrated, multi-disciplinary and holistic and to address stakeholders at all levels (institutions, public opinion, Roma communities, organizations and associations). In particular, the full citizenship of Roma people needed to be acknowledged by the State (so that their human rights were recognized) and by Roma people themselves (so that they felt empowered to act). The strategy was therefore to contribute to early childhood development, learning and wellbeing by creating the foundations for the social inclusion of children and families, working through small scale actions to problem solve in a specific local context (Sar San 2.0 project), accompanied by a wider strategy of advocacy, communication and networking at a regional, national and international level (Stop Roma Apartheid! and Aver Drom projects).

## Direct action with children and families

A wide range of activities in two main strands, were used to support and facilitate access to services (social, health and education) and to citizenship rights for Roma families and children. The first strand was delivered within the camp setting, where there were regular workshops for young children to help them prepare for formal learning and to engage mothers and children in learning through play when they were at home. The aim was to build capacities and basic skills of young to children (social, motor, cognitive, linguistic, manual etc.) through experiential activities based on real life and expanding children's horizons through projects such as 'The Children of the World' and 'The Kitchens of the World' which informed them about other cultures and helped them to understand their own. While there was an emphasis on strong educational value, the activities themselves were varied and creative to be as engaging as possible, including crafts, painting, movement and dance, play, story-telling and activities related to monthly themes. Across 3 camp settlements, 70 workshops were held in total involving 55 children between 2 and 12 years old.

*"I still hadn't enrolled my children in school and I was already worried that when they would go to school, they wouldn't understand anything."  
(Roma mother)*

The second strand involving children was school-based workshops for social inclusion and active citizenship. A total of 120 children from Roma and non-Roma backgrounds aged between 4 and 10 in 3 schools attended 80 workshops of 2.5 hours each. Crucially, 20 teachers were also involved gaining first-hand knowledge and experience of different approaches and how these affected the children. The sessions were designed to enable children to express their

*“Looking at you, I learned that I already knew things as a mother. That I have a responsibility to my children, but through you this feeling became even stronger. In that it is very important to raise our children well, to not send them out to do evil but to become an educated child.”*  
(Roma mother)

feelings and ideas, needs and cultures through which they acquired self-esteem and built cognitive and relational skills. In addition, building on books of simple stories, each child explored personal experiences, created a diary about in-school relationships, making problems explicit and enabled a shared search for solutions. Children’s rules for living together in school were developed using a child managed survey. There were also after school sessions for newly enrolled pupils focussing on language skills in particular, including prerequisites for reading and writing, ability to produce and understand language, skills in processing oral information, phonological awareness, short term memory and naming things.

There were also visits for children and young people outside the camps and opportunities to mix with peers from the wider community but these were constrained by limited resources. However, a summer residential camp (addressed to children aged 6-12 and to girls aged 13 – 18) – was held outside the encampments every summer in the past three years.

Twenty-four Roma mothers and young women from 4 settlements met regularly for training and support to facilitate their children accessing education, with the result that 50 Roma children who had never been to school before, were enrolled in nursery, primary and junior school by their parents, supported by the project staff. Parents took part into school activities and autonomously had interviews with teachers about their children school performance and collected the report cards at the end of the year.

Roma were supported to have direct access to healthcare (74 parents) and to social services support (87 parents) including financial support (such as fiscal codes, ISEE certifications, baby bonus, family allowances, etc.).

Fifty-eight Roma parents in the formal camps were identified and given legal assistance to establish their status and obtain documents such as birth certificate, residence permit, recognition of statelessness, citizenship, etc.).

There were less formal ways to empower Roma women, mothers and youth such as the Living Library events where Roma women and two Roma men acted as ‘human books’ and shared their stories with “readers” who were given the opportunity to come in contact with people they would not have met otherwise.

Another focus was on opportunities for young people to become activists. 35 young Roma and Sinti men and women (from Rome and other Italian cities) took part in workshops on human rights and 6 of them undertook 3 month internships at Associazione 21 luglio Onlus. The others were mentored by the Association and were able to take part in further trainings, international/national civil services, Erasmus + exchanges and internships offered by other organisations and they took part in the advocacy activities for political change.

*“Your work has had a very special value for us. When you came, the children were really happy. Through your activities, they have improved even more and now speak very well, much better than you and me and all us adults in the house. For me the important thing is that they have learned to distinguish, to recognize ...”*  
(Roma mother)

Wider public opinion was influenced by diffusion of ‘Roma voices’, positive models and experiences deconstructing prejudices and stereotypes; and by sharing research information and data about Roma childhood in Italy.

In total the project reached almost 2,500 young children (under 8), 772 of them directly, and over 3,700 older children and young people, 1158 of them directly. The children reached directly were roughly 50/50 drawn from the formal and informal settlements. Around 2,800 parents/ caregivers were reached indirectly..

## How did the project teams intervene?

The project teams were multi-disciplinary and committed to working together on an integrated approach. It is noteworthy that the Sar San 2.0 team included **5 team members** drawn from the Roma community (Cultural Mediator, 3 Activists, Facilitator and Driver) out of 15 staff members.

The two lead NGOs drew on an extensive network of partners (see Appendix 1) including schools, civil society organisations, local groups and community service providers, at local level as well as networks and coalitions at the City, regional, national and European levels. This enabled them to access knowledge, expertise and specialist resources (for example on health care for mothers and young children, training on activism and media monitoring, access to legal advice) and to leverage greater impact for their cause. Harnessing the resources of wider advocacy networks meant that key policy and decision makers could be reached at all levels (see Appendix 2).

## CHALLENGES **Very poor living conditions**

**The very poor living conditions** in the camps and their effects (ghetto syndrome, passivity, structural exclusion, etc.) on children and adults made it very difficult to promote change, due to lack of willingness to participate, mistrust, lack of perseverance. High rates of illiteracy limit the Roma's ability to represent themselves, to take up opportunities or services provided for them, or to advocate for change. Ongoing – and increasingly frequent – **informal camp evictions** undermined children's development and children and adult well-being, as well as disrupting project activities.

The vulnerability of Roma young women/mothers during and after pregnancy, and their low capacity to meet the physical, psychological and emotional needs of their children was a big challenge too.

### **Hostile public opinion**

**Hostile public opinion** towards the Roma stimulated by the media and political discourse, compounded by ignorance, has led to prejudice in the majority culture and local institutions which shows itself in discrimination and marginalization. Roma families find it difficult to access social, health or education services due to prejudice and stereotyping by service providers.

Given the context above, it was challenging to **design actions that built the capacity of Roma people to raise their voices and let them be protagonists of the changes** that affect them. Also to build mutual trust and respect with the majority community. The project aimed to create a virtuous circle inside Roma communities in which project beneficiaries supported their peers (for instance by assuming the role of communicator, helper, mediator, advocate, activist, facilitator) but this was ambitious given the fragility of their living conditions and insecurity. Finally, the project aimed to work upstream, denouncing abuses and exploitation involving politicians and CSO representatives and therefore directly exposing people engaged in the project **to hostility and menaces from the offenders.**

## Lack of political will and political instability

Initially, the lack of political will to collaborate in pursuing common objectives (such as the adoption of inclusive policies and measures to solve Roma issues) due in part to the Mafia Capitale scandal in 2014, which exposed the systematic exploitation of the Roma “encampment system” including the arrest of some representatives of the social cooperatives that had been providing services for years in the formal settlements. Political stalemate in the Municipality of Rome led to two elections in three years, leading to **institutional changes requiring continuous adaptation of the intervention strategy** and the identification of new interlocutors. Moreover, an internal reorganization of the National Anti-Discrimination Office (UNAR) weakened this body and left it without a Director General for some months. This situation was extremely threatening because it put at risk the implementation of the National Roma Integration Strategy as well as leaving civil society with no reference point for discrimination and unequal treatments.

## Fragmentation and conflict among the civil society organizations

**Fragmentation and conflict among the panorama of CSOs** dealing with Roma issues in Italy has made it very difficult to adopt a common stance against the violations of Roma rights and in favor of the end of the “encampment system”.

The marginalized and fragile situation of the Roma, very hostile majority public opinion and the unstable and ineffective institutional framework made implementing the project extremely challenging. As a result, there was an exponential nature of responses to the intervention: **every action implemented to resolve a problem gives birth to ten more requests.**

**OUTCOMES** The project aimed to give direct support to Roma families and children to access social, health and education services and legal support and to establish a virtuous relation between Roma parents, children and school communities. The main achievements were:

### Children's access to quality childhood services

*I realized that as the days passed, the children learned more and more; they could do things better and it all came naturally.* (Roma facilitator)

The range of age groups addressed, activity types and different locations of activities (school, camp and other locations) involving hundreds of children showed the potential for targeted activities and methods to facilitate Roma children's ability to access and to benefit from mainstream education and social provision. These activities and the parallel ones with parents and young people opened a window for Roma communities onto a much wider view of what was possible for them and their families.

#### In the words of the Roma mothers...

*"I am always so impressed by the fact that I'm learning from my little girl."*

*"There's no difference between how our children can be raised and an Italian. They're equal."*

*"It was also very important for me to be able to tell you what I've experienced. Surely it's really good that you came here, your presence is very important."*

*"It's very important that our kids go to school and very important that you are giving us a hand with it."*

*"The Games! Now the kids know how to play many more games than they knew before."*

*"I thought about how Adriana behaved when she wanted to use the bathroom, she was afraid to say so. But you're being here every week has helped her, and she has learned, and this to me was really important."*

*"It was very important for our children because they have begun to speak Italian and have begun to discuss together"*

### **Voices of elementary school teachers...**

*"Children now have a greater awareness in relation to their own behavior and greater ability to find solutions in situations of conflict through working together. They've developed the skills to autonomously establish common rules which satisfy everyone." (Elementary school teacher)*

*Whenever the children needed something, if they had a moment of difficulty - even the smallest thing - they would called for me, they wanted advice from me and they would always ask permission. This is something that I will take home, that I'll remember." (Roma facilitator)*

### **Influencing public awareness on Roma inclusion and early development**

Another primary goal was the closure of formal slums where Roma are segregated. Initially this had no local support, especially in Rome, and it was only promoted by international organizations. After almost 6 years of work, including continuous advocacy work with decision makers and a strong media presence, a cultural change has occurred and the "closure of Roma camps" is now commonly talked about by decision makers and public opinion. How did this happen? The key was actions at all levels from local to European, awareness raising, visits to camps by policy makers, lobbying, building alliances, direct legal action and public events and public statements to draw attention to critical issues and promote consensus for change (see Appendix 3 for more details). Building Roma capacity to act and speak about their own situation was an integral part as well as communication and campaign activities to build better understanding of the Roma community and to combat negative stereotyping and prejudice.

**LESSONS LEARNED** Several lessons were learned during the four year implementation of projects with and within Roma communities by the two Italian partners.

### **Participation and active involvement of Roma actors**

The achievements of the projects have been successful to a high degree due to the active involvement of Roma actors in the activities in the project, and in empowering them as rights holders. The courses for activism and the mothers' workshops provided an immense opportunity and support for young Roma and Roma mothers to be active learners and become agents of change in their communities. In order to succeed, any intervention targeted at Roma communities needs to be seen by Roma actors as effective, and should be accompanied by the promotion of positive examples from within the Roma community.

### **Multilevel lobby and advocacy**

The advocacy efforts targeted all levels of stakeholders bridging politics and policy with reality. From local to European level, the awareness raising campaigns, the visits to camps by policy makers, lobbying, building alliances, direct legal action and public events and public statements drew attention to critical issues and promoted consensus for change. In hostile environments, like in Rome, the restless multilevel advocacy was key.

### **Building local alliances**

For a change to happen for the Roma in Rome, local alliances and cooperation with: associations dealing with Roma rights, the local authorities (Municipality and Sub-Municipalities), national institutions (e.g. Senate's Commission for Human Rights, National Ombudsperson for children and adolescents), schools, etc., are key to providing the foundations for setting long term objectives; converting from an expensive "welfare" and "containment" of services into inclusive measures and practices can be done by relying on shared understanding and commitment among partners.

## **Housing and access to services is key for inclusion and for early childhood**

Given the very poor conditions in which Roma families live in formal or informal camps), it is very difficult for them to ensure a healthy, stimulating learning environment for their children. The experience in the project, when working for a longer period with families who moved temporarily in a decent building provided by the Municipality, indicated that results do not wait to show: empowered mothers, increased number of enrolled children and increased attendance in preschool and primary school, as well as autonomous access of services by families.

## **No social inclusion plan can succeed as long as camps are legal**

No social inclusion plan can succeed as long as camps are still legal and existing. The camps are confirming that segregation is accepted and are re-producing the prejudices regarding Roma population while violating their rights. Also the social inclusion projects addressing the communities living in the legal/formal camps can be successful up to a certain degree, as there are too many counter-acting factors implicit to those environments. In case of young children in the informal camps, is very difficult to insure a safe, pleasant, with basic equipment and enough large space to carry out learning and development activities. This should be provided outside the camps, thus allowing more interactions with non-Roma children too.

The Sar San project this year will open a community center which, through the provision of quality services managed by and addressed to Roma and non-Roma, would act as a model for reflections/decisions on issues related to child welfare, social inclusion and strategies to support an exit strategy from the camps.

## **Moving from a project-based thinking to a long term vision on social inclusion**

The interventions need to be accompanied by a long term vision that includes complex programs, and not short term based projects. There is a lot of work and money that can be wasted on punctual projects. The amplitude of issues to be addressed revealed by the implementation of singular projects stresses that a broader and cohesive strategy and plan is absolutely necessary.

## MONITORING AND EVALUATION

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Different approaches were adopted by the partners, including quarterly progress monitoring against the OECD DAC criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability, using evaluation of meetings, desk research and media monitoring. There were also participatory approaches, drawing on all perspectives by directly involving all actors including target groups, focussing on achievement of objectives; evidence of the process and achieved outcomes, highlighting threats and strengths; and seeking models that could be reproduced. Data produced included audio-visual material, notes collected through Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Whatsapp; direct/indirect observation, meetings and interviews with operators and target groups; participatory self-evaluation with children.

*I realized that as the days passed, the children learned more and more; they could do things better and it all came naturally."  
(Roma facilitator)*

The project was also monitored by the ISSA staff, and the role of ISSA was to create synergies between the two projects, and assist technically the projects' staff with suggestions for improvement of the project activities and regarding the implementation in general.

## SCALABILITY AND SUSTAINABILITY

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There are few elements of the project intervention that worth considering attention from the scalability perspective: the advocacy work (approach, consistency and diversity of actions) and the Roma mothers' empowerment. Both proved to have significant impact, one on the policy level (up to a degree in the determined period of time) and on communities (children and families).

In terms of sustainability, given the very hostile economic and social environment in Rome, the projects intervention would need much more time to become sustainable. The very instable political environment during the projects' implementation makes it hard to assess to what extent the intervention is financially sustainable. However, the impact that projects had on Roma actors (children, young Roma, Roma mothers) indicate that the action wise intervention is sustainable.

In order to move ahead, decision makers need a **plan to remove the camps** and redirect the resources currently employed in ineffective, expensive “welfare” and “containment” services into inclusive measures and practices and budget provision realigned. New roles should be found for the associations currently providing these services so that they are engaged with the new mission. As far as the informal settlements are concerned, **forced evictions must stop and people provided with adequate alternative housing**. Success in these twin initiatives could be pivotal in turning public opinion towards a more positive view of the Roma presence in the city.

Work to **link Roma communities with schools** should continue supported by the Municipal Education Office and to have lasting success, it should be accompanied by investment in the job placement of those who study, in order to create some positive role models of Roma who have succeeded due to their educational achievements. Roma children can successfully join in mainstream education but will continue to benefit from support to develop their basic skills in early childhood (relational, motor, cognitive, linguistic, manual, etc.); they – and all non-Roma children- would also benefit from a **more child centered approach** to education in Roman schools.

The links between all the different partners and stakeholders which have developed in this project should be maintained and strengthened and the active participation of the Roma and non-Roma communities will be essential. **Empowerment and activism of Roma women and young people needs ongoing support** and their active participation, alongside children, is crucial.

Roma communities (young women in particular) will continue to need help to access public services as will service providers to better understand and serve these communities. Better relations will result in a virtuous circle of reduced stigma suffered by Roma clients and reduced discrimination by service providers.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLICY AND PRACTICE

*"I heard them say: Wow, look at that woman, she's a Roma! But she does useful things, in the sense that she's together with my children and transmits a certain something, teaches them things, does activities with them. It's a plus for the children themselves. My children said to me: I want to do something like that when I'm grown up."*

*"I thought: if a young Roma woman (nb. Project Facilitator) can do this, maybe one day I can do it too."  
(Roma mother)*

*"Who knows? Maybe, one of these kids might remember when she's grown that I had been with them".  
(Roma facilitator)*

*"I finally had a reference point. I could talk to you, ask your advice and you managed to help me."(Roma mother)*

*"The teachers at school were amazed. They asked me, and then I told her about you coming to the camp and doing all the activities. And they said: "Now what can we do?! Do it again? How do we teach them new things?!" What I want to say is that they thought what you've done has served a lot."*(Roma mother)

Last, but not least, stereotyping and prejudice among the public at large needs to be challenged continuously, building on positive news and information about progress on Roma inclusion.

A specific objective is **to create in Rome a physical place (especially dedicated space) providing quality services managed by and addressed to Roma and non-Roma, to act as a model** for reflections/decisions on issues related to child welfare, social inclusion and strategies to support an exit strategy from the camps.

## APPENDIX 1 – PROJECT PARTNERS

- Istituto Comprensivo De Cupis and Istituto Comprensivo Luigi Di Liegro (accessing Roma children and families, holding children’s workshops);
- Istituto comprensivo I.C. via C.A. Cortina (educational support for Roma families, children’s workshops);
- Medicina Solidale (health support for Roma women and mothers; capacity building activities with Roma mothers and young women)
- Romamultietnica – Intercultural Service of Libraries in Rome (living library);
- Babelmed (living library);
- Cultural center “La Rampa” (children’s workshops; capacity building of Roma mothers and young women);
- European Roma Rights Center and Amnesty International Italian Section (workshops for Roma and Sinti activists);
- ASGI – Association of Juridical Studies on Migration (strategic litigation);
- Amnesty International – Italian Section; Arpj Tetto Onlus; ATD Fourth World; Bottega Solidale; Caritas; Casa dei Diritti Sociali, Cittadinanza e Minoranze; Hermes; Osservatorio sul Razzismo e le Diversità “M.G. Favara” – Roma Tre University; OsservAzione; Popica Onlus; Rete Territoriale Roma Est; Romni onlus and Zajno (coalition of organizations that work for the promotion of Roma rights or are service deliverers in the formal settlements in Rome promoted by Associazione 21 luglio with the aim of standing up together against the encampment policies in Rome);
- Save the Children, Italy (Convention on Rights of the Child group);
- CILD – Italian Coalition for Freedom and Civil Rights (advocacy at national level);
- Open Society Justice Initiative (advocacy at international level);
- Associazione Carta di Roma (media monitoring and training for journalists);
- ISSA and REYN – International Step by Step Association and Romani Early Years Network (professional development);
- Fondazione Migrantes, Legacoopsociali nazionale, Cooperativa Animazione Valdocco, Naga, Popica Onlus, M.O.C.I. - Movimento Cooperazione Internazionale, Un Mondo di Mondi (networking).

## **APPENDIX 2 – POLICY AND DECISION MAKERS REACHED BY THE PROJECT ADVOCACY ACTIVITIES**

The main decision makers involved in the advocacy activities have been:

### **At the international level:**

- the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights;
- Members of the European Parliament;
- members of the European Commission against Intolerance and Racism (ECRI);
- the European Union Ombudsman;
- the President of the European Committee of Social Rights;
- a delegate of the US Embassy;
- Spanish MPs.

### **At the national level:**

- the previous and current President of the Italian Republic, Giorgio Napolitano and Sergio Mattarella;
- the President of the Italian Senate, Pietro Grasso;
- the President of the Italian Chamber of Deputies, Laura Boldrini;
- the President and members of the Extraordinary Human Rights Commission of the Senate;
- the previous Minister of Integration, Cecile Kienge;
- the previous and current National Ombudsman for children and adolescents, Vincenzo Spadafora and Filomena Albano;
- the previous and current general director of the national anti-discrimination office (UNAR), Marco De Giorgi e Francesco Spano.

**At the regional level (Lazio Region):**

- the President of the Lazio Region, Nicola Zingaretti;
- Members of the Regional Council.

**At the local level (Municipality of Rome)**

- the previous Mayor of Rome, Ignazio Marino;
- the Deputy Mayor;
- Members of the Town Council;
- several Assessors;
- the Presidents and Council members of the III, V and VI sub-municipalities of Rome;
- the extraordinary Commissioner of Rome, Francesco Paolo Tronca;
- the City Prefect, Franco Gabrielli;
- the bishop of Southern Rome, Monsignor Lo Giudice;
- the candidates to Mayor at the local elections, among whom the newly elected Mayor Virginia Raggi.

## APPENDIX 3 – EXAMPLES OF ADVOCACY ACTIVITIES

### Successful actions:

- **Visits to formal slums and Roma-only reception facilities** with relevant institutional actors such as: Italian MPs - including members of the Italian Senate's Human Rights Commission; representatives of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance, of the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and of the U.S. Embassy in Italy; the Council of Europe Commissioner for human rights; a delegation of the Spanish Parliament, and the National Ombudsman for children and adolescents. These visits led to resolutions and warnings against the discriminatory policies implemented by the Italian Government disregarding its international commitments.
- Thanks to a joint pressure exerted with the Italian Senate's Human Rights Commission, in December 2015 the **"Roma Best House" was closed**. It was an industrial warehouse inadequate for living inhabited by 135 Roma, which did not comply with minimum adequacy requirements foreseen by the Italian law, as denounced repeatedly by Associazione 21 luglio.
- **The emergency measure issued by the European Court of Human Rights** in a decision made within 24 hours after the case was submitted, to stop the eviction of a disabled Roma woman and her daughter from the Roma-only reception center located in via Salaria in Rome. The decision represents a historic result as the European Court of Human Rights usually adopts such a measure to stop an "imminent risk of irreparable damage" as in the case of people being expelled from Europe to countries where they face ill-treatment. Moreover, victims of rights violations can only go to the European Court when they have no effective means of recourse before national courts. In this specific case, the two women successfully argued that the Italian courts did not provide any effective means for them to oppose the eviction.
- **Alliance building activity** within the Municipality of Rome. Upon request of a Municipal Councilor, the Association drafted a paragraph for the programmatic report attached to the annual budget of the Municipality of Rome, which envisages that money destined to Roma slums foreseen in the 2015 budget - 8 million € - will be devoted to inclusion projects and that 2 formal slums and 2 Roma-only reception facilities will be closed in the period 2015-2018. The paragraph was included in the final version of the report.

- Lobbying for **the establishment of the Regional Working Group** for Roma inclusion foreseen by the National Roma Integration Strategy in Lazio. The Working Group was finally established in February 2015. It consists of 4 thematic working groups (education, health, job and housing) and Associazione 21 luglio coordinates the working group on housing.
- Recommendations sent to the sub-municipalities of Rome aimed to **raise awareness about the necessity of closing “Roma camps” in the Italian capital**. The VI Sub-Municipality of Rome (that includes Tor Bella Monaca neighborhood) issued a motion requesting the closure of the Salone slum, located in its territory;
- **Denouncing the “camp system industry”**, which involves more than 35 public and private bodies, employs more than 400 workers and has a budget of more than 20 million euros per year, contained in two reports published in 2014 and 2015 released before the opening of the investigations regarding the Capital Mafia Scandal that emerged at the end of 2014.
- In the last years, Associazione 21 luglio has also been conducting **pilot legal actions** directed at making Italian decision makers accountable for the human rights violations perpetrated. The main achievement was the groundbreaking sentence of the Civil Court of Rome issued on 30 May 2015, following a complaint raised by Associazione 21 luglio and ASGI in 2014, which recognized for the first time in Europe that Roma slums are a form of segregation and discrimination based on ethnic grounds and that they breach Italian and European law. As argued in the complaint, **the construction of the “village” La Barbuta in Rome was recognized as discriminatory in nature** – and therefore unlawful by the mere fact that a specific ethnic group, the Roma, was segregated from the local population through the provision of housing from the Municipal Council. The judgment is particularly important as it applies also well beyond the context of La Barbuta.
- In 2012, Associazione 21 luglio launched a video campaign called “Roma, citizens of tomorrow’s Italy” covering 6 stories of Roma living in “ordinary” houses and leading “ordinary” lives. The campaign had 15,000 views on Youtube and successfully presented to the public a **counter-narrative about Roma** dismantling prejudices and stereotypes.

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