

Hungary

1. INSTITUTIONAL ISSUES

1.1 Decade Action Plan Drafting

Following the “Roma in an Expanding Europe” conference organized by the Open Society Institute and the World Bank in Budapest in 2003, Peter Medgyessy, Prime Minister of Hungary at the time, committed his country to host the secretariat for the preparatory and early phases of the Decade of Roma Inclusion, between September 2004 and June 2005. Hungary had already been working to coordinate the incipient phases of the Decade before the conference. Medgyessy delegated then-Political State Secretary for Roma Affairs Laszlo Teleki to oversee the establishment of the Decade secretariat, the development of operational structures for the Decade, and the drafting of the Hungarian Decade Action Plan (hereinafter, DAP). Teleki was to work directly under the Prime Minister’s office. After the government was restructured, in May 2003, the Decade program and secretariat were transferred to the Office for Equal Opportunities, under Minister for Equal Opportunities without portfolio Katalin Levai. In September 2004, the program and secretariat were again transferred, to the Department for Roma Integration within the Ministry of Youth, Family, Social Affairs, and Equal Opportunities (hereinafter, the Ministry of Youth). The head of the Ministry of Youth, Minister Kinga Goncz, acted as national coordinator during the preparatory phase.

Consequently, the DAP drafting process was led by the Department for Roma Integration in the Ministry of Youth, in coordination with the office of then-Political State Secretary Teleki—who has been acting as a government Roma expert and member of parliament following the 2006 elections. The drafting of the DAP was the specific task of the National Working Group (hereinafter, the Working Group), which consisted of officials from all relevant ministries, including those in charge of Roma-related issues in specific ministries; representatives of the Minority Ombudsman’s Office; the Office for National and Ethnic Minorities; the National Roma Self-Government; the Central Statistical Office; and, on the Roma civil society side, participants in the Young Roma Leaders’ Forum and the leaders of two major Roma groups in Hungary, the Roma Civil Rights Foundation and Lungo Drom.

When starting the drafting process, the Working Group used as a basis the Government Program to Promote the Social Inclusion of Roma (hereinafter, the Social Inclusion Program), which was adopted by the government as Decree 1021 in May 2004. While the Social Inclusion Program does not mention the Decade, it maps out policies and individual measures aimed at Roma inclusion through the end of 2006, and many of the actions listed in it are understood by the Hungarian government to overlap with Decade goals.

The Working Group designed the broad outlines for a draft DAP. By the time the Decade Secretariat was established in Hungary, in September 2004, the draft DAP had been sent to all relevant line ministries for

approval, and the Working Group appears to have dissolved for all intents and purposes. Coordinating the finalization of the DAP was left to the Interdepartmental Committee for Roma Affairs, an inter-ministerial consultation body that brings together experts working on Roma issues in Hungary's central government. This Interdepartmental Committee was originally designed as a high-level body whose membership was supposed to consist of undersecretaries, commissioners and heads of departments. But, in practice, the members of this committee over the past few years consisted primarily of the so-called "Roma referents"—advisors in various ministries, who have no real decision-making or political power in government structures.

In June 2005, then-Political State Secretary Teleki and Andor Urmos, head of the Department for Roma Integration in the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor (hereinafter, the Ministry of Labor), held public debates seeking input on the draft DAP from local authorities, minority self-governments, nongovernmental organizations and other relevant stakeholders. The input from local stakeholders was used in designing a long-term strategy for the entire duration of the Decade.

Until December 2006, all actions under the Decade were governed by the Social Inclusion program which covered the 2004–2006 period. As of this writing in January 2007, Hungary had not officially adopted a DAP. A Long-Term Strategy for the Decade of Roma Inclusion was expected to be adopted by the government and then submitted for parliamentary approval by May 2007. Over the past two years, the Interdepartmental Committee has reviewed several draft versions of the DAP, and several drafts of a two-year operational plan on Decade implementation, none of which has been approved or adopted by the government as of this writing.

2.2 Draft Decade Action Plan Content

The text of the preliminary plan for the Decade publicized by the Hungarian government lists a series of broad goals and targets in the four focus areas of the Decade—education, employment, health and housing—as well as in two cross-cutting priority areas, promotion of equal treatment and gender equality. By

singling out these two priorities, and detailing specific goals, measures, implementing agencies and indicators in these areas, this plan sends a strong message that Hungary is seeking to address race and gender inequalities systematically and thoroughly during the Decade.

On the other hand, the design of the preliminary plan for the Decade as publicized by the Hungarian government falls short of the criteria set for DAPs by the Decade's International Steering Committee (hereinafter, ISC) on a number of counts. Many elements are vague: What the document lists as "targets" are mostly a series of goals and general measures, and, in one case in the health section, government programs that are ongoing. Indicators are not designed as measures of social distance between Roma and non-Roma. Instead success is gauged in terms of relative increases or decreases in absolute numbers or percentages of Roma benefiting from individual programs, measures or services. Sources of data are unclear, and the document calls for producing data on Roma inclusion "every fifth year," which would be insufficient for measuring progress accurately, or for adjusting policies as necessary over the course of the Decade.

Both the agents for the implementation of Decade activities and the system for monitoring various activities are left vague. Implementing bodies are listed merely as "ministries," with no specific assignment of responsibility. Monitoring is tasked to the Working Group, which is called on to "prepare an annual report on the implementation of the national Decade Action Plans in order to document and monitor the progress made in the accomplishment of the goals and targets set, and [...] suggest further amendments or expansions of the Action Plans, involving in these efforts the representatives of the Roma civil society as well." According to the document, this annual report was supposed to be presented before the ISC. As mentioned above, the Working Group appears to have dissolved after the initial drafting of the DAP, and, consequently, no such official annual report on Decade progress in Hungary has been presented before the ISC as of January 2007.

One other problem is budgeting. The design of the preliminary plan for the Decade says: "According to the decision of the Hungarian Country Working Group, the Hungarian Action Plan is meant to be a strategy for 10 years (2005–15), and for that reason it does not contain a budget and percentage figures as indicators." The

plan gives no further explanation as to why the longer term of the strategy precludes specific budget estimates for its implementation. The Hungarian government takes the view that targeted Roma programs financed from earmarked budget lines actually push Roma issues even further away from the mainstream policy agenda. Consequently, the government often refuses to segregate funding benefiting Roma in its public reporting. The resulting absence of specific budget lines for programs and measures affecting Roma under the Decade makes it even harder to estimate the actual impact on Roma of a large number of programs designed for broader categories of disadvantaged groups.

1.3 Decade Coordination and Implementation

In the new governmental term, which began in 2006, the Decade of Roma Inclusion Program came under the authority of Labor Minister Peter Kiss, who is the official national coordinator of the Decade in Hungary. In practice, responsibility was delegated to the Department for Roma Integration within the Ministry of Labor, headed by Urmos. Both the Decade coordinator and the head of the Department for Roma Integration have been actively promoting the Decade in national and international fora. Additional promotion took place in 2005, when then-Political State Secretary Teleki visited a large number of municipalities in Hungary on behalf of the Working Group. Teleki sought to introduce the Decade and garner support for the implementation of Roma inclusion goals on a local level, as well as to receive local feedback on the long-term Decade strategy.

The Department for Roma Integration, which runs day-to-day coordination activities of Roma issues, is one of only two operational inclusion units dealing with Roma within the Hungarian government. The other one functions under the Ministry of Education. The so-called “Roma referents” who were appointed in various line ministries in Hungary following the 2002 elections have all been downgraded or eliminated from ministry structures. Those former referents who are still working in government are now advisors or simply civil servants. The remaining govern-

ment advisors in charge of Roma-related issues are in the Interdepartmental Committee for Roma Affairs, which currently works on the draft long-term Decade Action Plan and is supposed to oversee implementation following adoption.

Another body, which is supposed to provide a mechanism for consultation with civil society, was still being formed as of January 2007. According to government officials interviewed for the purposes of this report, half of this body, called the Council on Roma Integration, will be Roma inclusion officials and advisors in various line ministries, and the other half will be representatives of civil society. This council is expected to function as a standing advisory body for programs and policies relating to Roma integration, including those listed under the Decade. Meanwhile, the head of the Department for Roma Integration in the Ministry of Labor has said that the government also intends to set up an expert group, which would include economists, sociologists and others, and would provide technical support to the government on policies affecting Roma.

2. FOCUS AREAS

2.1 Education

Hungarian data protection law prohibits the collection of data on ethnic and racial issues without the written consent of the self-identified subjects. It is, however, legal to collect some data based on the perceived ethnic or racial identity of subjects, although the government does not keep such records in a systematic manner. Consequently, the little information available on Roma enrolment comes from records kept by schools, based on teachers’ and school administrators’ perception of the ethnicity of students. These records are sent directly to the Ministry of Education, and the data is neither consistent across the school system nor regularly updated.

While non-enrolment and drop-out rates among Roma in Hungary appear to be lower than in other Decade countries, independent reports in recent years have pointed to a host of other problems that Roma

face in the educational system (European Roma Rights Centre, *Stigmata*; EUMAP, *Equal Access and Rights of People*; Roma Education Fund, *Advancing Education*). The major problems that have been reported include: segregation into separate, mostly- or all-Roma mainstream schools and classes, which offer substandard education; placement of Roma students in so-called “catch-up” classes, where they follow a remedial curriculum, which in effect precludes them from actually catching up with their non-Roma peers and transferring into mainstream classes; relegation of Roma students who are perceived as causing discipline problems to “private student” (home schooling) status, which in practice greatly reduces their academic performance and graduation chances; overrepresentation of Roma in special schools for students with intellectual disabilities as a result of flawed assessment and diagnosis procedures; and streaming into dead-end short-term vocational schools, which do not offer the necessary training or qualifications for integration on the labor market.

The primary objective of reforms to the Hungarian educational system since 2002 has consequently been the elimination of segregation in mainstream schools, following up on the campaign promises of the winning government coalition. Achieving this objective requires policies that provide equal opportunities and the development of corrective measures to ensure equality of educational outcomes for vulnerable groups of students, including Roma. Inclusive education is supported on a systemic level through the development of governmental integration programs and the adoption and enforcement of anti-discrimination legislation, which explicitly bans segregation. Both the investigative arm of the Ministry of Education (the Public Education Center for Monitoring and Examination, known by the Hungarian acronym OKEV) and regular courts have proven effective in dealing with cases of desegregation. In a recent case, a regional court ordered the closure of an all-Roma school in the Miskolc area, which sent a strong message on segregation to both educational institutions and the justice system in Hungary (Amnesty International, *Report 2007*; EUMAP, *Equal Access*). Still, individual remedies are unlikely to produce the kind of systemic change that can be effected through government programs. Unfortunately, government programs aimed at the integration of dis-

advantaged groups, though well intended and intelligently designed, have yet to impose systemic changes.

Preschool education in Hungary is available to children as young as 3, but it is only compulsory for children who are in their preparatory year, at the age of 5. There are no tuition fees for public preschools, and children whose families receive regular child support benefits are entitled to free meals. However, parents still incur some costs, in particular with regard to transportation, hygienic supplies or any activities viewed as extracurricular by the preschool administration (end-of-year shows, class trips, etc.). Hungarian regulations adopted in 2003 and then amended in 2005 mandate that preschools cannot refuse enrolment of disadvantaged children, including Roma, beginning with the age of 3. But in practice this provision is rarely followed, as in many areas there is a shortage of preschools, and administrators often use overcrowding as a reason to refuse registration. Furthermore, as many Roma children live in settlements that are far from any preschool, the proportion of Roma who have not attended any preparatory education by the age of 6 is much higher than among non-Roma (EUMAP, *Equal Access*; Roma Education Fund, *Advancing Education*). Moreover, even while the number of inhabitants in Hungary decreases, the number of Roma living in impoverished areas is increasing. Ministry of Education officials interviewed for the purposes of this report estimate that children in 50-60 settlements currently do not have access to a preschool, while another 40 settlements have preschools in their vicinity but do not have sufficient spaces in them for all children who qualify. The Regional Development Operative Program, which is part of the National Development Plan, offers the opportunity to expand the number of places available in kindergartens through a public tender procedure, but the extent to which this opportunity is to include Roma children in preschool education is not known as of this writing.

Children who do not attend preschools before the age of 5 are often referred by school or preschool officials to special boards that evaluate school readiness and assess whether an intellectual disability is present (EUMAP, *Rights of People and Equal Access*). Inadequate diagnosis procedures often lead to the placement of Roma children in special schools, where they follow a reduced curriculum and receive a lower quality educa-

tion, which does not give the kind of qualifications that could be useful in the labor market. The government committed itself to developing new assessment mechanisms, but that reform has yet to take place. Some safeguards are built into the system as part of a government program known as “Out of the Back Row” (European Roma Rights Centre, *Stigmata*; EUMAP, *Equal Access and Rights of People*; Roma Education Fund, *Advancing Education*; Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor; *National Strategy Report*). Disability has been more narrowly defined in the Act on Public Education to exclude mild intellectual disabilities, and school placement decisions are ultimately referred to the child’s parents. But Roma often lack the necessary information to make decisions on placement, and they often report being easily intimidated by the examining board members’ expertise. As a result, children diagnosed as having an intellectual disability are rarely placed in mainstream schools. Another supposed safeguard is the requirement that examining boards must review each child periodically. But, since neither the membership nor the methodology of the board changes from one examination to another, subsequent examinations are unlikely to result in a decision to revoke the initial diagnosis (EUMAP, *Rights of People*).

The 2003 amendments to the Act on Public Education introduced incentives for desegregation of special schools in the education system, so that mainstream schools receive more than double the amount of per-capita funding for integrated students, who would have otherwise been placed in special schools. But special schools still receive relatively high per-capita funding, and they are unlikely to relinquish students to mainstream schools, lest they should lose their financing and be forced to scale down, or even to close down altogether (Roma Education Fund, *Advancing Education*). Consequently, as the government itself acknowledges in the draft DAP, the segregation of Roma into special schools is still an area where more government programs are needed.

The introduction of per-capita funding as part of the decentralization process in Hungarian education appears to have had negative effects on the education of Roma children. School administrators became motivated to keep as many students as possible, and they tried to prevent the migration of non-Roma students to other schools by separating Roma students in so-called

“catch-up” classes, regular all-Roma classes or even separate buildings. Following up on campaign promises for the 2002 elections, the Hungarian government adopted a program supporting integrated education for multiply-disadvantaged students, and it built in a series of incentives for desegregation into the national-level financing and educational support system. Schools and local authorities were invited to apply for integration grants—often referred to in English as “integration normatives” (Mohacsi, “Government Initiatives”; Szendrey, *Short Summary*). Technical support as well as teacher training programs are provided through a newly set-up government agency called the National Network of Educational Integration, and additional after-school support is ensured through a network of study halls (known in Hungarian as “tanoda”) and community centers, located primarily in Roma communities. However, the decision of applying for desegregation grants is entirely up to school administrators and local authorities, and the central government has little leverage to encourage institutions that are reluctant to apply because they fear there will be political repercussions from the local non-Roma electorate. Another incentive for desegregation is provided in the form of one-time grants of HUF 50,000,000 (approximately EUR 200,000) available to local authorities willing to close down segregated schools within their jurisdiction. Unfortunately, according to Ministry of Education officials interviewed for the purposes of this report, only seven applications for these grants were submitted as of this writing—and only two of those were deemed eligible. It appears that closing down segregated schools brings about political liabilities that are greater than the financial burden of maintaining them.

To make matters more difficult, independent reports suggest that some institutions that applied for desegregation funds merely reshuffled their class structure, without actually mixing Roma and non-Roma in integrated classes (EUMAP, *Equal Access*; Roma Education Fund, *Advancing Education*). The government publicly recognizes the need for an adequate monitoring and evaluation mechanism for this program, but it has yet to put one in place as of this writing. The Ministry of Education has initiated an early warning system, aimed at involving government institutions, educational experts, civil society organizations,

and Roma minority self-governments in pointing out cases of discrimination in education (Mohacs; Roma Education Fund, *Advancing Education*). But thus far, this system has not proven to be an effective tool for dealing with segregation.

Another component of the government's educational program is the funding available through so-called "skill development grants," which go to isolated settlements where integration is physically impossible, either because of distance or because of the high number of Roma children in proportion to non-Roma in the area (Roma Education Fund, *Advancing Education*; EUMAP, *Equal Access*). According to Ministry of Education officials interviewed for this report, about 50 settlements are eligible for such grants, which are intended to ensure the highest quality of education possible in these segregated settings.

Roma students can access the general social support programs that are available to disadvantaged groups and are intended to facilitate access to primary and secondary education on an equal-opportunity basis (EUMAP, *Equal Access*; Roma Education Fund, *Advancing Education*). This support includes the provision of free schoolbooks and sometimes free school supplies, periodic family allowance increases before the beginning of each school year, and subsidies for school meals. Furthermore, in a number of educational institutions, Roma parents from the local communities are employed as school mediators, who seek to assist communication and reduce drop-out rates. Together with the National Employment Fund, the Ministry of Education has decided to support and expand this initiative, and to encourage schools to permanently employ trained and qualified school mediators (referred to as "pedagogical assistants"). According to Ministry of Education officials interviewed for the purposes of this report, over the past four years, 62 pedagogical assistants with elementary school certificates received further training and vocational qualifications—and were employed in the school system.

Merit-based scholarships specifically targeting Roma students were available through the Public Endowment for Hungarian Roma (hereinafter referred to by its Hungarian acronym, MACIKA), founded by the Hungarian government (EUMAP, *Equal Access*). The program was intended to provide money to cover school-related expenses, but many students used the

funding to supplement their families' income. Meanwhile, suspicions were raised that non-Roma were also trying to make use of these grants. Following an ill-advised attempt to require that the ethnic origin of all applicants be certified by the local Roma minority self-governments or NGOs, in 2006, MACIKA's role in managing the scholarships was transferred to the Office for National and Ethnic Minorities. According to Ministry of Education officials interviewed for this report, an overall review of the program structure is pending. The Ministry of Education provides a series of merit-based scholarships targeting senior students in compulsory primary education, senior secondary school students, and students seeking vocational qualifications in "shortage or scarce trades" that would facilitate their inclusion on the labor market.

Additional incentives built into the educational system include fees for mentoring teachers and so-called "success bonuses" for teachers whose students achieve good results. On the whole, however, most teachers in Hungary are ill-prepared to deal with multicultural environments, and they are reluctant to work in non-homogenous classroom settings. University education for teachers offers little in the way of training for inclusive schooling, and it overemphasizes informative knowledge of subject matters rather than formative understanding of a variety of teaching methodologies (EUMAP, *Equal Access*; Roma Education Fund, *Advancing Education*). Little progress has been made on school curricula reform. In some cases reported by NGOs and the media, new textbooks even promoted stereotypes that linked Roma to criminality and portrayed them as difficult to integrate. Those textbooks were withdrawn from circulation following these reports (EUMAP, *Equal Access*).

Affirmative action measures provide free access to state-funded university courses and colleges for minority and disadvantaged students, as long as they comply with admission standards for students who pay full tuition. The Ministry of Education also provides a HUF 10,000 (EUR 40) monthly bonus for senior students who act as mentors for minority and disadvantaged students.

2.2 Employment

Because of data protection laws, Hungarian authorities do not officially record statistics on employment by ethnicity or race. Official estimates regarding Roma employment are therefore not available. Still, regional employment offices seem to account for ethnicity in their records, because, according to officials at the Ministry of Labor interviewed for the purposes of this report, there are approximately 80–90,000 Roma registered as unemployed, and 25–30,000 of these are included in various employment schemes.

Unofficial reports rate unemployment among Roma as being much higher than among the general population (UNDP, *Faces of Poverty*; European Roma Rights Center, *The Glass Box*). Fewer than one-third of Hungary's Roma appear to have employment as their main source of income. Among women, the unemployment rate is even higher—partly because of the more traditional division of labor in Roma households and partly because permanent employment in low-qualification jobs available to Roma are usually in the highly gendered areas of construction, sanitation, etc. (Berliner Institut für Vergleichende Sozialforschung, *Economic Aspects*).

Labor centers offer various courses for their clients. A more limited choice of qualifications is naturally available to graduates of elementary school than to those who completed secondary or tertiary education. Programs for those excluded from the workforce are available in Hungary. Most of these programs are accessible to—and actually designed for—Roma, even though equal opportunities policies often prevent government officials from saying so explicitly. There is no official data on how such policies affect Roma in practice, but anecdotal evidence suggests that Roma are indeed among the primary beneficiaries of many of these programs. For instance, according to Ministry of Labor officials interviewed for the purposes of the report, a governmental program titled “Run Forward,” which provides for the training of 10,000 people with a budget of HUF 3.5 billion (more than EUR 14 million), does not explicitly target Roma, but it is expected to deliver services primarily to unemployed Roma within the next year or so.

According to the same officials, more than 40 other programs provide training, guidance, mentoring

and psycho-social support, as well as follow-up support in the wake of employment. Again, according to officials in the Ministry of Labor, 30 percent of the participants in these complex labor market programs were Roma. An interesting finding for the purpose of policy design is that the training and job performance of Roma in these programs was identical to that of non-Roma in those cases where Roma received minimum-wage-level compensation, rather than the nominal income supplement usually granted to participants in such programs. Based on this finding, Ministry of Labor officials intend to amend the Employment Act so as to provide financial incentives for participation in labor activation programs. Another means to increase participation in such programs would be to facilitate a better flow of information between the 20 regional labor centers, with their 174 local branch offices located throughout the country. Local minority self-government offices, as well as NGOs, could act as conduits for information between Roma communities and government offices that provide training and employment services. Systematizing the flow of information would allow the government to integrate various regional employment programs into a national active employment policy that is designed to be easily accessible to Roma.

Targeted programs explicitly designed for Roma are still few and far between in Hungary, primarily because the Hungarian government takes a mainstreaming approach to Roma integration programs. According to Ministry of Labor officials interviewed for the purposes of this report, 11 out of 39 projects financed through a European Commission EQUAL tender dealt with the reintegration of Roma in the labor market. Run in partnership with NGOs and trade unions, these projects are expected to have positive outcomes for their beneficiaries, but a full evaluation cannot be made until 2008, as most projects were still in the preparatory phase as of this writing.

The Public Foundation for National Employment ran a pilot project aimed at promoting business activities in Roma communities in 2006. The pilot was reportedly not successful, but the Ministry of Economy and Transportation now runs a HUF 200,000,000 (EUR 800,000) annual program that supports Roma entrepreneurs and Roma-friendly business. Despite the relatively low budget of the program, over the past three years, more than 600 Roma or Roma-friendly

businesses have been financed in this manner (Ministry of Economy, *A hazai roma mikro-, kis-, es kozepvallalkozasok* and *A roma valallkozasfejlesztesert*).

Anti-discrimination law in Hungary offers strong protections, in particular through the Equal Treatment Act and some newly adopted amendments to the Civil Code. The Equal Treatment Authority has taken an active role in the prevention of discrimination, while courts have sanctioned violations not only consistently, but also strategically. Still, these protections too often do not act as sufficient disincentives for potential employers, and Roma job-seekers usually know too little about the protection mechanisms available to them (European Roma Rights Center, *The Glass Box*; Bodrogi and Danka, “Litigating Discrimination”; Farkas, “Will the Groom”).

2.3 Health

The government and the National Statistical Office do not collect health data by ethnicity. The little data that is available comes from independently conducted one-time studies that relied on the hetero-identification of Roma subjects and were limited in both geographic and substantive scope. The best such study was conducted during 2000-2001 by the National Institute for Primary Health Care, and it revealed severe disparities between the health outcomes of Roma and non-Roma. The results of the study, however, are by now outdated and cannot be used as an accurate baseline for the design of comprehensive policies. The health section of the Hungarian draft DAP recognizes the need for adequate data—but it goes on to call for data collection every fifth year, with no further details as to how this will be done or how such limited collection can serve the purposes of designing and adjusting policies throughout the course of the Decade.

The draft DAP does not mention any measures to expand healthcare services to those who do not have access to health insurance. Health insurance in Hungary is currently tied to employment or registration with labor and unemployment offices. Moreover, health insurance is dependent on residence registration, which in practice means that long-term unemployed Roma

living in illegal housing, as well as the homeless, cannot access the country’s healthcare system. The highly centralized and user-unfriendly Hungarian healthcare system is currently going through a complex reform that will introduce a number of novelties. Private healthcare insurance schemes are expected to expand, but this is unlikely to affect the situation of Roma, most of whom cannot access the state insurance system because they are too impoverished to afford the costs associated with private insurance (European Roma Rights Centre, *Ambulance*).

The priority area in the health section of the DAP appears to be filling vacancies in healthcare units in areas with larger Roma populations. Indeed, Hungarian doctors and other healthcare providers are often reluctant to take positions in such areas, either because of racist attitudes, or simply because they believe that, as the health outcomes of Roma are much worse than for the general population, they would have to take on a disproportionate amount of work. The Hungarian government has been contemplating solutions to this issue for years now. The government provides additional financial support for healthcare practitioners who take positions in areas where there are no family doctors on an as-needed basis, but no large-scale policy decision had been made as of this writing. According to the DAP, the Hungarian government also intends to develop anti-discrimination and anti-bias training for the health sector, including inter-cultural education and Roma culture modules in nursing colleges. Such programs are urgently needed, as there have been frequent reports in Hungary of discrimination against Roma in the provision of healthcare.

In terms of addressing Roma beneficiaries directly, the Ministry of Health, through the National Institute for Primary Health Care, has reported spending HUF 266 million (approximately EUR 1 million) on coordinated health education, awareness and information campaigns that included diabetes and heart disease screenings, early diagnosis, and treatment of alcohol addiction. Some pilot outreach programs have been conducted in cooperation with mainstream and Roma media—including an oral hygiene screening campaign launched together with the Hungarian “Health” magazine and Radio C, a Budapest radio station that targets a Roma audience (Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor, *National Strategy Report*).

Training programs for health mediators in Hungary were initiated five years ago, and some of the graduates were assigned to work in Borsod and Heves counties. But the mediators were not permanently employed at the end of the program, and no nationwide health mediator programs have been implemented since. The draft DAP presented by the Hungarian government does list the training of Roma healthcare providers as a goal, but no details as to how the policy will be designed and/or implemented are available.

2.4 Housing

Large numbers of Roma in Hungary live in predominantly Roma settlements at the edge of towns or in virtually segregated inner-city areas, in substandard conditions. These communities are often without access to basic amenities, such as electricity or running water, and sometimes they lack even basic infrastructure, such as paved roads. Moreover, the wholesale privatization of urban housing stock, coupled with weakened legal protections afforded to tenants, has sparked a wave of forced evictions of Roma from central areas of major towns that are slated for economic development. Thus, in the early years of the new millennium, hundreds of Roma families were evicted without court rulings. Instead, the families were put out pursuant to mere notaries' orders, without being offered alternative accommodations or any other type of compensation (European Commission, *The Situation of Roma*; European Roma Rights Centre, *Housing Rights*).

As with other areas, the Hungarian government does not maintain data on Roma housing on a national level. The last survey that included data on Roma housing dates back to 1993. For policy planning purposes, the government relies on various one-off, independently conducted studies, which are not nationally representative. For instance, in the first half of 2001, the School of Public Health of Debrecen University conducted a sampling study in three northeastern counties with large Roma populations (*Telepek es Telepszaru Lakohelyek*). Based on the finding of this study, the

government launched a comprehensive program, the Housing and Social Integration Program, which aims to support Roma integration by addressing the living situation of Roma throughout the country. The program deals not only with housing-related issues, such as the clarification of property rights, infrastructure improvement and access to public utilities, but also with issues like employment and public health. To help address these areas, the program brings in local employment offices and health institutions as partners. Further funding for an education element for the program was brought in by the Roma Education Fund. The ambitious substantive scope and integrated approach of the program, however, has in practice meant that the number of locations in which it could be enacted from the outset was quite small. Thus, out of 40 settlements originally approached by the government, only 22 ended up being solicited to apply for an average of HUF 150,000,000 (approximately EUR 600,000) each. From those 22, only nine had been accepted by the end of 2006, and another 10 or 11 are expected to join them in 2007 (Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor, *Interim Evaluation Report*). The preliminary evaluation of the first phase of the program suggests that governance of the program needs to be improved. Changes needed include the following: integration must indeed be prioritized over conflict avoidance; instead of taking a wholesale approach, those designing and implementing individual projects should work on a case-by-case basis; Roma beneficiaries must be included in project design; and monitoring and evaluation must be conducted regularly and from close-up (Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor, *Interim Evaluation Report*).

Other Hungarian government measures for improving Roma housing include a program for the legalization of unregistered settlements initiated in 2006. Social housing, on the other hand, is not part of a centrally designed strategy. In Hungary, the building of social housing is left to municipalities. Experience so far indicates that more regulation is needed in this area, as the allocation of social housing is often subject to allegations of corruption, and municipalities often choose to build very low-quality houses or apartments, which hardly meet the standards of adequate housing.