



# Roma-Net

## Integration of Roma Population

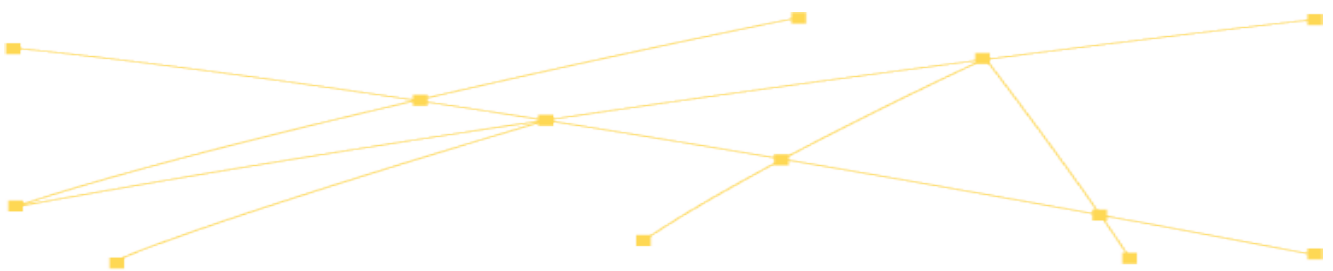


### Case Study

#### Partners to Partners meeting

#### Budapest – Glasgow

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EUROPEAN  
PROGRAMME  
FOR  
SUSTAINABLE  
URBAN  
DEVELOPMENT





Glasgow August 24, 2011

## Executive Summary

My visit to Glasgow, as the delegate of the Budapest LSG, has revealed the differences between the two cities. Each city has a Roma community but because the situation and the issues are different the solutions are different as well. While Budapest has this minority group for centuries, for Glasgow it is a new challenge. Although we are in a different phase and we need to include different ways of solutions in our Local Action Plans, the visit was fruitful since we could exchange experiences and get to know each other's approach.

## Introduction and background

Glasgow is the biggest city in Scotland and the third biggest in the United Kingdom. It has a population of 592,820<sup>i</sup>. From the 18<sup>th</sup> century the heavy industry (tobacco shipment, textile manufacturing, shipbuilding, coal and steel industries) created a huge demand for labor and the city sucked up many peasants from the surrounding areas and from further away as well. The years of prosperity ended in the late 1970's and the city had to face recession and the spiraling unemployment. Glasgow, therefore, launched numerous regeneration projects. Housing problems and low living standards are, however, still present at certain areas, such as Govanhill.

Migration and foreigners have never been distant from the city's history (wars, asylum seekers, immigrants). The net migration rate is 4.1 migrants per 1,000 population. The biggest minority groups in Scotland are the Indian and Pakistani community.

Economically 78% of the population (Aged 16-64) is active and the unemployment rate is 7.7%. These facts are slightly better than the average of the United Kingdom.<sup>ii</sup>

While the second generation is already present among Pakistani and Indian immigrants, who have already made their way to universities and prospering businesses, Glasgow has a new wave of immigrants coming from Romania and Slovakia.

During my stay in Glasgow, I have visited 2 organizations (Community Renewal/Crossroads and Govanhill Housing Association) in the morning and am attended the Local Support Group meeting in the afternoon.

## Community Renewal

It is an organization that works mainly in small neighborhoods and housing estates to improve the wellbeing of families and communities.

Community Renewal works to transform communities by engaging and supporting people to get involved in community activity and to improve health, learning and employment. Since 2003 the





organization have supported over 3000 people into jobs and 1000 into training or education, and about 1000 others to take active measures to improve their health.<sup>iii</sup>

Among other interesting projects Community Renewal has the program to solve the problems of the newborn Roma community in Glasgow.

Bob Marshall the director of Community Renewal gave me a good overview on Scotland's Roma issue:

The Roma immigrants do not make up a homogenous, coherent group. There could be several reasons for that such as they speak no common language (one of the Romani languages), or the community is fragmented by different tribes. Since Roma have been present in Central Eastern Europe for a long time, there are Roma they only speak the official language of the country they have come from instead of speaking their native Romani. In our case Glasgow has a wave of immigrants coming from Slovakia and Romania speaking Slovakian and Romanian languages. Therefore mostly the only way of communication is having a translator or having a coworker speaking the language.

As I stated previously, the Roma immigrants are different from the earlier immigration waves. They speak no English; feel mistrustful even with the people trying to help them, which is a heritage that runs in their history. Scotland has a well developed social infrastructure that enables every registered person in Scotland to reach free health care system, education etc... Yet, Roma have problems utilizing this advantage. In order to get free health care everyone needs to register. Roma do not register due to several issues. That could be the lack of English knowledge or they do not feel comfortable filling out forms with their personal data.

Community Renewal is the first door where Roma can knock on. They help with telephone conversations, or filling out forms and they provide basic information. Community Renewal gives advices to their clients on certain issues such as "landlord exploitation" (see more at the next paragraph).

## GovanHill Housing Association

I was given a thorough presentation of Govanhill housing issues by Anne Lear, the director of the Association.

There are three different housing types in Glasgow. You can be an owner of a condominium or you can rent an apartment that could be either private or public. Real estate prices are considerably high in Glasgow, so buying a house or a condo is out of the picture for many residents. Considering our case the only option for Roma is to rent apartments.

Public housing is both the cheaper and the harder way. Unfortunately public housing is out of reach for immigrants. It is really hard to get even for Glaswegians. What is left for Roma immigrants is private housing.<sup>iv</sup>

Private housing on one hand is more expensive and on the other hand it has more risks. The regulation of private landlords cannot be 100%. In Glasgow you should be registered in order to





rent out apartments. Yet, black market creates a segment of landlords that are not registered. In these cases there is no protection for the tenants. And that goes without saying there are some landlords exploiting their tenants. Exploitation is, among many, one of the biggest challenge and problem for immigrants. The tenants are in the hands of their landlords. Lack of infrastructure is not a problem in Glasgow. Public utility (electricity, gas, sewage) is everywhere in the city.

Govanhill is one of the 12 neighborhoods in South East Glasgow. It has an estimated population of 15,000 although the increase in migrant workers to the area is unlikely to be accurately reflected in the registered demographic data available.

It is estimated that over 40% of the population are from a minority ethnic origin. 27% of the Govanhill Housing Association's housing stock is let to people from a Black or Minority Ethnic (BME) background, with higher concentrations of the BME population residing in the unimproved, privately rented or owner occupied sectors of housing in the area.<sup>v</sup>

In Govanhill we talk about half a dozen of streets where, among other immigrants, Roma mostly live. This small neighborhood is packed with different nationalities including Roma. It is rather rundown than a slum. Crime rate, alcohol and drug misuse is high in Govanhill.

At the second part of our meeting I was asked to briefly summarize the programs and the achievements of the Roma Self Government of Budapest. I have highlighted our “common future” events (both the programs of Roma Self Government of Budapest and Roma Civic Association). Where we invite Roma and non-Roma to meet, have conversation with each other (e.g. ‘Share a Table – Common Roma-Hungarian Lunch’, ‘The Day of our Common Future’), to unite them for different causes (e.g. Roma Hungarian Blood giving), or to get to know each other and each other’s culture better (e.g. Roma-Hungarian Cultural Event).

We coordinate integration programs for elementary school children with our Goodwill Ambassador Molnár Ferenc “Caramel”, who is an iconic Roma singer.

And, also, I have explained the operation of our non-profit workforce agency, how we help the underprivileged, unskilled and hopeless citizens to get a job.

For more information check out our brochure here:

[http://rptinfo.hu/Download/RPT\\_english.pdf](http://rptinfo.hu/Download/RPT_english.pdf)

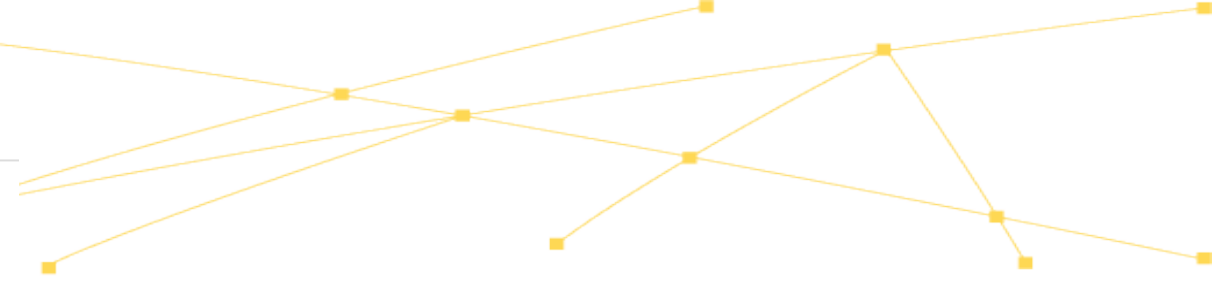
## **Glasgow Local Support Group Meeting**

It was interesting to meet all the organizations at once at an LSG meeting, however, I did not have the time to meet everyone in person. This meeting was interesting for the Glaswegians, as well, since this was the first one where the facilitator of the program was present.

The involved institutions were very similar to the Budapest LSG (the City Council, civil organizations) except that in Glasgow the Police were present as well. In Budapest we formally did not include the Police. (This is something we might consider as an option.)

During the meeting the facilitator lit up the core activities and goals the LSG should have and at an effective pace the group has decided on the next couple of moves.





- Circulating a proposed outline structure of the Local Action plan to get opinions
- Pulling together information from all LSG member
- A series of depth one-to-one/group meetings
- Survey among Roma in order to get to know their real needs (involvement of Roma is to be decided by asking them if they are willing to participate at a later stage)
- Contacting local members to speed up the LSG's work.

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**Roma Self Government of Budapest**  
**Roma Net**

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<sup>i</sup> <http://www.scotland.org>

<sup>ii</sup> <http://www.statistics.gov.uk>

<sup>iii</sup> <http://communityrenewal.org.uk/index.php>

<sup>iv</sup> Legislation is under way so Roma could get public housing as well.

<sup>v</sup> <http://www.govanhillha.org/about-govanhill>



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