



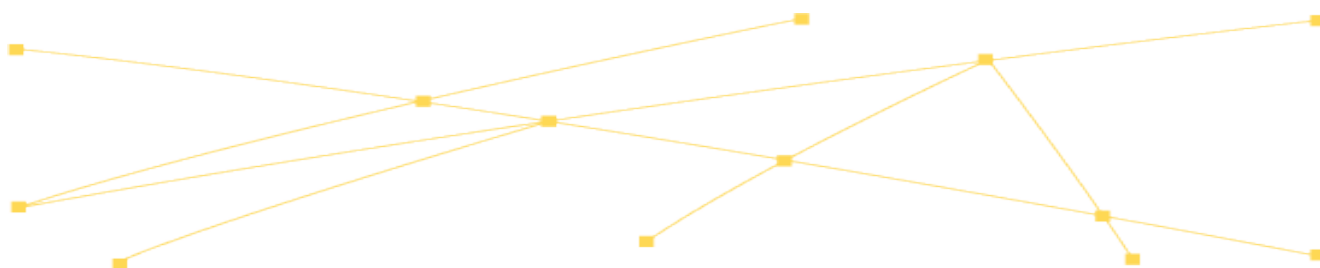
**Roma-Net**

Integration of Roma Population



## Case Study on dispersal program

# Rehousing and social integration program in Madrid



EUROPEAN  
PROGRAMME  
FOR  
SUSTAINABLE  
URBAN  
DEVELOPMENT





## Introduction

In Spain there has been a long term history of slum clearance though with some controversial results in the early programs. However as a result of the long term efforts the percentage of Roma living in substandard housing has been reduced from 31 to around 11 percent during the last two decade.

This case study presents a good practice on housing intervention aiming at rehousing Roma families living in segregated shanty towns into adequate housing in the non-segregated part of Madrid.

## Background of the program

A large slum clearance program was carried out between 1978-1986 in Madrid however around 2600 families, mainly of Roma origin, was left out. Therefore another program was launched from 1986 aiming at rehousing these families and thus improving their housing conditions. But only 570 families were relocated in non-segregated part of the city while in the case of 1120 families housing was provided in newly developed, so called Neighbourhoods of Special Typology. Such special neighbourhoods meant improved housing conditions but still in segregated areas often without public transport and only with limited access to services (school, health care etc). These areas became dilapidated soon as well due to their segregated nature and its consequences.

In 1997 according to a survey still 2674 families lived in a 62 socially inadequate settlements. In order to eradicate the remaining slums a new initiative was launched in 1998.

## Aim and structure of the program

The aim of the program to rehouse the 2900 socially excluded families most of them Roma in non-segregated areas of the city while also facilitating their social integration in the new living environment. In order to avoid the over concentration of rehoused families inside the city and thus generating new problematic areas, a quota system was set up to define the even distribution proportion among the districts. Beside the housing intervention social, education, training and employment measures are also included in the program. Furthermore a special emphasis is put on to mediate conflicts between the rehoused former slum dwellers and their new neighbours.

The Rehousing and Social Integration Institute (IRIS) was set up by an act of the regional parliament of the Autonomous Community of Madrid in 1998, which was charged with the management and the implementation of the program. To implement the social and other soft measures the IRIS set up 8 Community Development Centers (the first one already in 1999) and one Job Center.

In order to ensure the cooperation of the concerned stakeholders IRIS made formal agreement with the relevant municipal authorities (Department of Education Madrid Regional Government, Department of Social Services of Madrid Regional Government, Madrid Housing Institute, Federation of Madrid Local Authorities etc.). The partners provides political, financial technical support to the program.

The majority of funding comes from the government of Madrid. Between 1999-2008 the program had a total 217.5 million Euro budget.



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## Program elements

The program provides a long term support for the beneficiary families by preparing them to participate in the program, relocating them to the new living environment and then facilitating their adoption to the new circumstances.

Through the program the families are provided by public rental housing with subsidized rent which is much below the market rent. The target was to accommodate about 200 slum dweller families a year in public rental housing. In order to meet this target the number of public rentals had to be increased as there was a lack of such housing. Therefore IRIS purchases units on the second-hand housing market and renovates them and then rent them out to the families participating in the program.

However there are certain eligibility criteria that the families living in slums have to meet. Such criteria are that the family has no property in Spain, its income is below a certain limit, the head of household is over 25 or with children, has not been provided by any public property and is a resident of Madrid for at least two years (this condition is handled with some flexibility). Belonging to ethnic minority was not a priority among the criteria.

The relocation is based on a formal agreement between IRIS and each beneficiary family. Furthermore the rental contract concerning the provided rental unit in the non-segregated area also has a so called social clause including responsibilities that the families have to take upon such as participation in training programs in order to improve access to employment and school attendance of children.

The process of relocation and integration consists of seven main activities:

1. Firstly documenting the actual situation in the slum: the housing circumstances and basic data of families
2. Preparing families to be rehoused: social workers, educators, teachers visit the families regularly while they still living in the slum and connect them to social services, and also help them to prepare documentations needed for participating in the program.
3. Finding and renovating the alternative housing for the beneficiaries of the program which is done by IRIS.
4. Choosing properties for families according to the size of the families and their other needs such as the proximity of work place etc. Social workers assign the housing for each families.
5. Rehousing families and demolishing their former housing in the slums right after the family moved out.



6. Providing follow up services for the beneficiaries after they were rehoused: the social worker team dealing with the families in the process of relocation put the family into contact with social service providers (and passes over the families' documentation) located in the new living environment and also a social worker is appointed from the relevant Community Development Center. The families are regularly visited by the social workers, who also mediate conflict between the beneficiary families and neighbours if needed. The community centers and the job center implement programs to facilitate the families' social integration. Another important action is that they help to connect those rehoused families who have similar problems, needs and live closer to each other.
7. Checking regularly the rental flats whether they are still occupied by the beneficiary families.

## Results

Between 1999-2003 the program rehoused 1256 families and eradicated 25 slums. By 2009 altogether about 2000 families (around 5000 persons) were rehoused.

The total budget was 217.5 million Euros of which 174,4 million Euros were spent to 1401 units (purchase and renewal) to be rented out for the beneficiaries.

An assessment of the program in 2003 showed that 33 social workers facilitated the social integration of the families while another 17 supported labour market related programs.

This assessment also showed that majority of the beneficiary Roma families felt no social rejection in their new living environment while only 5 percent of their neighbours perceived many conflicts and 79 percent had experienced no or few conflicts.

## Problems

Main problems of the program has been that the financial capacity of the rehoused families are not sufficient to pay housing costs (rent and utility and other service costs etc), therefore many of them accumulated housing costs related debts.

Those who have properties in somewhere else in Spain cannot participate in the program however they do not go back to their original settlement even when their slum dwelling is demolished. They rather move in to relatives' housing usually in another slum area.

The close relations of extended families are often broke up while they are not substituted with new ones, e.g. children used to play with their cousins every day while now they are quite far away from each other and it is difficult for them to find new friends.

## Lessons

Rehousing socially excluded people among them Roma people from slums to non-segregated part of a city can be implemented and sustainable in terms of social integration if it is accompanied by long term preparation and follow up programs handling their multiple disadvantages.



However some problems persist on the long run such as difficulties in having access to permanent employment because of the low qualification, long term unemployment etc. This also has effect on the ability to cover housing cost even with subsidized rent.

Such a complex project requires a sufficient, well organized institutional background and efficient harmonization of the different kind of interventions. Therefore it is ideal if an independent public organization manages such programs.

The program also requires the cooperation of different partners such as public authorities, institutions, private and non-governmental organisations. In order to ensure a clear and efficient distribution of tasks and responsibilities formal agreement should be made between the partners. To carry out such a costly and complex program on the long term a strong political commitment is needed.

#### Sources:

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[http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/attachments/Roma-Housing-Case-Study-Spain\\_en.pdf](http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/attachments/Roma-Housing-Case-Study-Spain_en.pdf)

A Sky without Cardboard: Rehousing and Socially Integrating Madrid's slum dwellers

<http://www.unhabitat.org/bestpractices/2004/mainview.asp?BPID=2734>

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