



USAID
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ACTIVITY BRIEF

Roma Integration Program

USAID

Regional Services Center



Youth enjoying playground in Kezmarok, Slovakia.

Partners:

Partners for Democratic Change (headquarters, San Francisco) and Hungary, Czech Republic and Slovakia Partners Centers

Geographic Targets:

The nine community sites are Bruntal, Chomutov, and Pardubice (Czech Republic); Hatvan, Ozd and Pecs (Hungary); and Kezmarok, Presov, and Rimavska Sobota (Slovakia).

Project Duration:

05/20/2003-05/19/2007

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Activity Background

The Roma have long been the largest, poorest and most marginalized minority in Europe. The problems they face became exacerbated following the collapse of the socialist system and include high unemployment, substandard housing, low rates of educational attainment and political participation, racial violence, a distorted image in the media, and direct and indirect discrimination. USAID seeks to reduce social and political exclusion and improve the quality of life of Roma through the Roma Integration Program (RIP), a four-year \$2.8 million program, launched in 2003 in the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia.

Core Interventions

Cooperative Planning. The program supports cooperative planning with municipalities and minority representatives who seek to improve living conditions for Roma in their communities. Communication and negotiation skills, joint project development, and project management are supported.

Conciliation Commissions: The program supports 8 conciliation commissions as a model for solving problems and facilitating positive relations between Roma and their communities.

National Initiatives: Through roundtables, Roma advocacy groups promote their interests with national leaders and policy makers. Issues include non-discriminatory media reporting on Roma, education initiatives that promote equality and diversity, and government support for Roma outreach professionals.

Activity Results

-Over 340 people have been trained in change and conflict management skills in the three countries and regularly use their skills to improve Roma-majority relations.

-Currently, community projects worth over \$300,000 are being implemented in 9 target communities in the region designed to improve Roma access to services. To date, projects have provided education, health, employment and other services to over 2000 beneficiaries.

-Diversity programs have reached 115 teachers and teaching assistants and 921 students.