



REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA
MUNICIPALITY OF LEZHA

Lezha Municipality Local Action Plan on Roma and Egyptian Integration

2013-2015





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BEST PRACTICES
for
ROMA INTEGRATION
in the Western Balkans

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

EU	European Union
RDE	Regional Department of Education
E	Egyptians – used in tables for convenience
WG	Working Group
INSTAT	Institute of Statistics of the Republic of Albania
UN	United Nations
CoE	Council of Europe
MES	Ministry of Education and Sports
MSWY	Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth
LGU	Local Government Unit
ODIHR	Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
NGO	Non-governmental organization
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
LAPREI	Local Action Plan for Roma and Egyptians Integration
BPRI	Best Practices for Roma Integration
R	Roma – used in tables for convenience
REF	Roma Education Fund
DCM	Decision of the Council of Ministers



AKNOWLEDGMENTS

This Action Plan is a joint effort of public and non-public institutions at the local level directly connected to the advocacy and promotion of the rights of the Roma and Egyptian communities in the city of Lezha, including: the Municipality of Lezha, the Employment Office, the Regional Social Service Office, the Civil Registry Office, the Regional Public Health Department, civil society organisations, Roma and Egyptian organisations, and the Chamber of Commerce in Lezha.

Special thanks go to the members of the working group, who, in regular meetings organised during the drafting of the strategy, with their opinions and discussions gave a valuable contribution to the drafting of this document.

Special thanks, also go to the representatives of the Roma and Egyptian communities who participated in the working group for drafting the Action Plan; whose expertise and dedication was vital to drafting the Action Plan, which would have otherwise been impossible.

We are grateful to Ms. Ilda Bozo, Head of the Social Inclusion Department at the Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth, and Ms. Blerina Zoto, Specialist at the Technical Secretariat on Roma issues at the Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth, for their constant technical support throughout the drafting process of this document.

Finally, we would like to thank the staff members of OSCE/ODIHR Project on Best Practices on Roma and Egyptians Integration, who have devotedly assisted and contributed to the success of the consultation, drafting and finalisation processes with regard to this local policy document.

We are most obliged to the European Union. Thanks to EU funds provided to the Project on Best Practices on Roma and Egyptians Integration, this document is drafted and now published.

Lezha municipality



Dear fellow citizens,

The Action Plan of 2013-2015 for the development of Roma and Egyptian communities is a priority policy of the Municipality of Lezha to promote integration in general. The Municipality aims to improve the living standards of vulnerable groups, an important part of which are also Roma and Egyptian communities and thus we express firmly our commitment to meet a very important condition for the integration of Albania into the European family.

On the basis of the normative framework, the Municipality has the responsibility to promote the integration of socially excluded groups in accordance with its capabilities, in particular to take part in providing the conditions and improving health care, housing, law enforcement, education and children's social care.

During recent years, the Municipality of Lezha has implemented several interventions in the field of Roma integration, most of which were ad.hoc. in nature. These interventions were mainly related to social welfare in the framework of Roma Decade implementation.

This Local Action Plan includes a set of priorities and concrete measures aimed at improving the status of Roma and Egyptian population in Lezha, their integration into the local community, and creating basic

prerequisites for the respect and implementation of human rights.

The Action Plan responds to the need to address the challenges associated with social inclusion of Roma and Egyptian and coincides with policies at the central level to address the situation of disadvantaged target groups for the period up to 2020.

The development of this document is the result of successful cooperation between the affected parties, other institutions at local and central level, Roma and Egyptian associations and international organizations such as OSCE – ODIHR. This was done to improve coordination and to achieve harmonization of the best planning and our common resources.

Let this document be a powerful tool for meeting the core objectives for a more inclusive and sustainable integrated Roma and Egyptian community. It will also be a tool for meeting the core objective of respecting the rights of minorities at a local and at a wider level.

Viktor Tushaj
Mayor, Municipality of Lezha

Lezha, 22.08.2013





INTRODUCTION

The Local Action Plan of the Municipality of Lezha for Roma and Egyptians Integration 2013-2015 is a document of this local government unit aiming the integration of Roma and Egyptian communities in the social and economic life. The plan highlights four priority areas of the “Decade of Roma Inclusion”, priority areas of education, employment, health, and housing, as well as two national priority areas such as social inclusion and equal opportunities and cultural heritage.

The Roma Inclusion Decade (hereinafter the Decade) is an initiative of some of the Central and South Eastern European countries to improve the social and economic status, as well as address the social inclusion of Roma minorities in the region. It is a first multi-national project that seeks to actively improve the living conditions of Roma. The Decade is a political commitment of participating states to curb inequalities in the aspect of social and economic development of the Roma, through the implementation of political reforms and programmes drafted to break the vicious circle of poverty and exclusion.

Albania expressed its willingness to join the Decade in 2007, thus becoming a full member through a Council of Ministers Decision No 437, dated 08.04.2008. Later, a National Action Plan for the Decade was developed, which set the goals and indicators in priority areas of the Decade, namely education, employment, health care and housing.

In this context, the Local Action Plan (LAP) for Roma and Egyptians in the Municipality of Lezha aims at promoting the respect of rights of Roma and Egyptian communities, while seeking their full integration in the society. The document is based on the legislation in effect, and is in conformity with international human rights standards. The aim of this plan is to actively promote strengthening of democratic institutions and the rule of law, especially through dialogue and establishing institutions for the application of the rights of Roma and Egyptian communities. Similarly, this document will support and encourage civil society organisations that represent the interests of the Roma and Egyptian communities and foster cooperation with them, including all the stakeholders.

The commitment of the Government of Albania is confirmed in the vision for the integration of the Roma and Egyptian communities in the society, stating that the Republic of Albania is an independent, sovereign, free and democratic state, where international human rights standards are applied and all communities may live without fear, enjoy equal opportunities and pursue

the vision to build their common future¹.

The Constitution of the Republic of Albania has reflected high standards of human rights and pays particular attention to minority communities living in Albania. Consequently, in the framework of the commitment to guarantee the best life possible for all communities, the Municipality of Lezha pays particular attention to Roma and Egyptian communities, which are recognised as special communities in Albania.

The Local Action Plan for Roma and Egyptian integration thus represents a significant contribution in the efforts of the Municipality of Lezha to establish a climate of tolerance, peaceful co-habitation and mutual respect among different communities.

The Local Action Plan, implemented in the right spirit, shows that activities to upgrade the situation of ethnic minorities, more than an obligation, represent a significant contribution, which is in line with the respect for values such as diversity and tolerance, and are also a cornerstone in today’s democratic societies.

There is lack of information about the living conditions for the Roma and Egyptian communities, both at central and local government level as well as among civil society organisations. This seriously affects the quality of policy planning and implementation.

The purpose of this Local Action Plan is to help the Municipality of Lezha apply feasible and efficient mechanisms ensuring effective and periodic data collection on Roma and Egyptian-related issues, so as to comply with the principles on ethnic minority protection and make possible monitoring and assessment of the progress made in the implementation of the strategies and of the action plans. Furthermore, this local Action Plan will contribute to building the capacities of the Roma and Egyptian communities and to analysing the data on their welfare and access to services.

This new initiative is expected to promote multi-cultural co-operation between all stakeholders involved in the implementation and monitoring of the measures for Roma and Egyptian communities integration and promotion of good governance principles.

The Action Plan for Municipality of Lezha preserves the organisational structure of the National Action Plan, but the identified actions refer specifically to the Municipality of Lezha. Consequently, the Action Plan² is formatted according to both the National Strategy and the Action

¹ Constitution of the Republic of Albania (amended)

² National Action Plan for the Decade of Roma Inclusion, 2009



Plan as well as the data collected by organisations and communities at local level. This has helped identify and resurface needs of the communities and subsequently incorporate them in the Local Action Plan.

The Local Action Plan on Roma and Egyptian Integration addresses the following areas:

- Education;
- Employment and social protection;
- Housing and infrastructure;
- Health care;
- Social inclusion and equal opportunities;
- Cultural heritage.

The Local Action Plan for the Municipality of Lezha focuses on two of the most marginalised groups of the Albanian society: namely the Roma and the Egyptians. Settled in the area of Lezha centuries ago, the Roma and less so the Egyptians have been able to preserve over time their tradition and culture. Historically, the relations between these communities and the local Albanians have been distanced, but, unlike in many other countries in Europe, Albania has witnessed no conflicts or persecutions on ethnic/racial bases. During the post-socialist transition period, because of the collapse and closure of state-run enterprises matching their profile, low education, and especially because of discrimination, the Roma and Egyptian communities downgraded from a state of relative welfare to extreme poverty. Actually, they represent one of the poorest groups in the city of Lezha.

This Local Action Plan is drafted based on the analysis of quantitative and qualitative, primary and secondary data collected in the area of Lezha. The research methodology consisted in:

- i. *Focus group discussions with local Roma and Egyptian communities;*
- ii. *Semi-structured interviews with main stakeholders, representatives from public and private institutions, and formal and informal Roma and Egyptian community leaders;*
- iii. *Statistical data collected from the electronic system of the National Action Plan.*

PRINCIPLES

The Local Action Plan for Roma and Egyptians Integration (LAPREI) at the Municipality of Lezha is based on the following principles:

The principle of equality and unjust discrimination

This principle is well established in the Constitution (Article 18), according to which the legislative body is obliged that, in its legislative activity, be guided by realisation of equal opportunities, for compliance with the rights for all entities. According to the principle of equality, all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. No one should be privileged or discriminated against on

grounds of gender, race, religion, ethnicity, language, political, religious or philosophical beliefs, economic condition, education, social status. Equality and non-discrimination are at the foundation of all international standards and national legislation on minorities and other groups in unfavourable position. These standards encourage states to promote the development of basic conditions to enable all to benefit from equal opportunities to education, employment, housing and health care. It also includes the possibility for states to undertake and implement positive actions (principle of positive discrimination), to undertake special measures and provide special treatment opportunities or support to individuals, categories or groups, provided reasonable and objective conditions exist.

The principle of social integration

Another important principle of the LAPREI is that of social inclusion of Roma and Egyptian communities. Despite efforts made in the recent years, this category still represents one of the most marginalised categories, hence subject directly to the process of social exclusion. Under these circumstances, it is important to increase efforts to promote access to employment and all resources, rights, goods and services in the favour of Roma and Egyptian communities that experience social exclusion or are vulnerable to this phenomenon. On the basis of this principle, the plan seeks to curb and prevent the risk of social exclusion, acting in favour of Roma and Egyptian individuals and households most at risk, with the active involvement, while facilitating the participation of all stakeholders.

The principle of civil rights and participation

Dignity and justice are two foundations on which institutions and the civil society should act to promote the full exercise of rights by all individuals. Civil rights protection for the Roma and Egyptian communities in Albania definitely includes improving their public image and acknowledging the positive contribution of their culture in the Albanian society. Whereas numerous efforts have been made by institutions and not-for-profit organisations to improve the public perception of the Roma and Egyptian communities, negative perceptions by various groups of the society still exist, leading to discrimination for these groups. In order to guarantee the civil rights and help Roma and Egyptian community members it is absolutely essential for public and private organisations to facilitate access to and encourage them to participate in all the areas of public, political, and social life. Participation should be exercised across all levels, i.e., participation at governing levels or active participation in everyday life matters. It is also necessary to encourage the participation of members from excluded groups, who still have to go a long way to achieve an effective exercise of their rights as citizens of the Republic of Albania.



The principle of decentralisation

One of the fundamental principles for the local governance in Albania and other democratic countries is the principle of the decentralisation of power. This principle lays at the foundation of the organisation and functioning of local government. It is exercised through the constitutional principle of local autonomy and it is a pre-condition for the existence of self-governance power, according to modern concepts for the organisation of a democratic state. The organisation and functioning of the local government and its relations with the central government depend on the constitutional and legal context of decentralisation of power, local autonomy and self-governance. In this framework, this document, based on the principle of political decentralisation, aims to provide members of the Roma and Egyptian communities, and elected representatives more power in the decision-making process.

This action plan is drafted based on the principle of political, administrative and fiscal decentralisation.

The principle of special measures that do not discriminate the majority

Special measures tailored to minorities or other ethnic and/or linguistic communities should not be discriminate for the rest of the population. Achieving substantial equality may require taking special measures and such measures should not be considered as discriminating. The Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (Article 4) explicitly prohibits discrimination on grounds of belonging to a national minority, while sanctioning that complementary and appropriate measures should be taken, where necessary in order to promote full and effective equality between persons belonging to a national minority and those belonging to the majority. Such measures need to be in full compliance with the principle of proportionality so that they are not considered as discriminatory for the rest of the society, as long as they meet certain conditions (positive discrimination) and serve to balance discriminatory behaviour.

In this context, it is clear from the document that the public administration is obliged to act in respect of the proportionality principle and not to the detriment of the essence of human rights and freedoms.

DRAFTING PROCESS OF THE LOCAL ACTION PLAN

The Methodology

The starting point for drafting LAPREI was the approach of the legislation and action by the government of Albania

to Roma and Egyptian communities. In addition to being expressed in the legislation, this approach is also part of the National Strategy and Action Plan of the government of Albania. The main goal of these documents is integration of Roma and Egyptian communities in the Albanian society, by providing employment, education, improved housing, and inclusion in state institutions, while strengthening their decision-making role.

This action plan is based on Articles 13 and 108-115 of the Constitution of the Republic of Albania and Law No 8652, dated 31.7.2000 On the organisation and functioning of the local government, amended.

This document is in line with the National Strategy for Improving the Living Conditions of the Roma, OSCE Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti within the OSCE area³, National Action Plan on the Roma Inclusion Decade for the period of 2010-2015, Operational Recommendations from the workshop on the inclusion of Roma and Egyptian communities in the framework of Albania's European integration and other national and international strategic documents.

The drafting of the Local Action Plan went through a process of counselling, including a broad range of stakeholders. Before analysing the situation of the Roma and Egyptian communities in the city of Lezha, a working group was established, institutions were identified and introductory meetings were held with them.

To identify the local stakeholders and involve them in the design and later implementation of the LAPREI, various participation techniques and methodologies were employed such as **Venn Diagram**, **Stakeholder Analyses**. The working group⁴ established for this purpose as the key instrument for designing this strategic document on local policy orientation in the Municipality of Lezha.

The plan was designed based on the quantitative and qualitative analysis of primary and secondary data collected in the area of Lezha. The research methodology includes: i) discussion in focus groups with the local Roma and Egyptian communities; ii) semi-structured interviews with the main local and national stakeholders and formal and informal Roma and Egyptian community leaders; iii) statistical data retrieved from the electronic system of the National Action Plan.

Data were collected through field work by a local expert, both in direct contact with the Roma and Egyptian community members (either individually or in focus groups), and in meetings with stakeholders from public and non-public institutions at local level.

Special contribution on data collection was due to local stakeholder working group established in December 2012, with the purpose of assisting, facilitating and provision of contribution to drafting the Local Action Plan.

³ OSCE Action Plan: <http://www.osce.org/odihr/17554> accessed on 7.6.2013.

⁴ More on the working group will be explained in the following page.



Working Group

The working group is composed of 13 members, as follows:

- Chair – Viktor Tushaj (Mayor)
- Programming and Development Department – Dile Nikolla
- Economic Assistance and Social Services Department - Llesh Doku
- Gender Officer - Anila Jaku
- Education Office at the Municipality of Lezha – Bardh Dedgjonaj
- Regional Education Department - Albina Gjini
- Local Roma and Egyptian NGOs – Bujar Berisha / Rauf Selimi / Man Sinani
- Civil Registration Office in Lezha- Lindita Patoku
- Housing Unit, Municipality of Lezha - Nikolin Prendi
- Health Care Unit - Sandër Marku
- Local Expert (OSCE/ODIHR) - Edison Kipti

The establishment of the working group and its regular meetings aimed at engaging local and regional stakeholders throughout the process for designing the local action plan. These were interactive meetings where discussion was on-going, ideas and opinions were shared, based on the concrete experiences and problems faced during the daily work with the Roma and Egyptian communities. In these meetings, working group members gave their direct contribution with regard to assessing the needs of the Roma and Egyptian communities in the city of Lezha, they made concrete recommendations for interventions that should be included in this document, and effective ways to implement them.

Each field is identified and addressed in a specific way, identifying detailed and concrete activities, indicators, stakeholders, supporters, budget and potential resources to fund the budget, including the central government, local government, donors or civil society organisations. The views of the working group members have been

consistently reflected throughout this document.

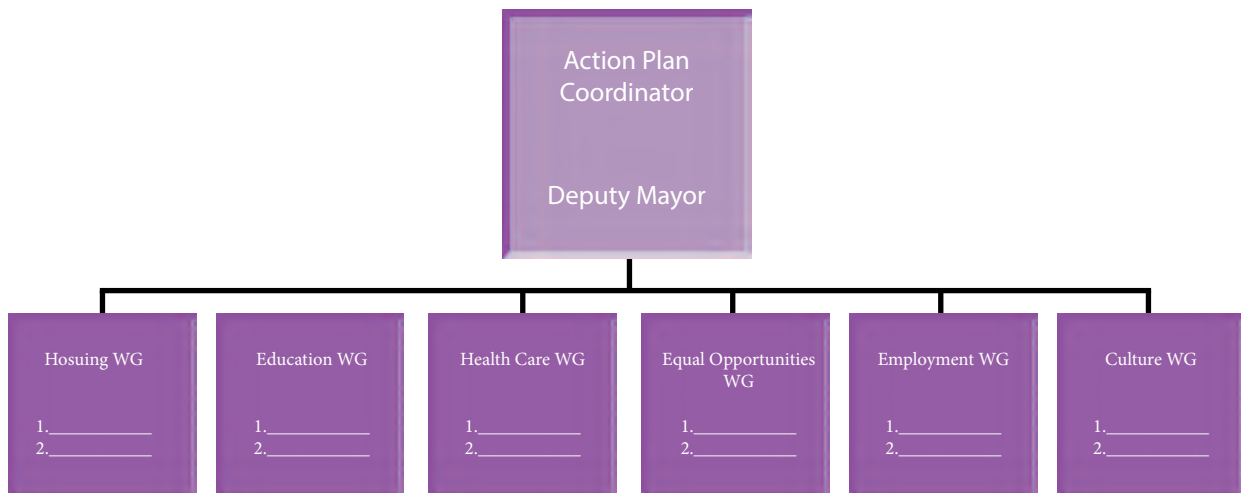
During the formulation process of the LAPREI, continuous consultations with the staff of the OSCE/ODIHR Project “Best Practices for Roma Integration” proved to be very helpful. The project staff provided continuous feedback for experts at local level, designated for drafting the action plan, and facilitated the exchange of experiences with other experts involved in drafting action plans, and learning from best practices in the Western Balkans, with regard to drafting a sustainable, effective and functional action plan.

The organizational structure of the coordinating, monitoring and implementing mechanism

In line with DCM No 617, dated 07.09.2006 On indicators for the evaluation and monitoring of social protection programmes and Order No 1, dated 02.02.2007 of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, the municipalities/communes shall every quarter submit an update to the social assistance and services in the Region.

Furthermore, the improved legal framework related to data collection about the indicators through the webpage www.romalb.org to monitor the indicators of the National Action Plan for the Roma Inclusion Decade is binding for the Regional Councils to collect data from all local government units under their jurisdiction and report directly to the Technical Secretariat on Roma issues. The indicators collected by the Regional Councils are a combination of indicators from all line ministries.

In this framework, the Municipality of Lezha has established a unit for coordinating, monitoring and implementing the Local Action Plan for the integration of Roma and Egyptian communities in this municipality.





The proper functioning of this structure will be based on Instruction No.1, dated 02.02.2007 of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, whereby municipalities/communes every quarter will send information to the social assistance and services sector of the Region, according to Council of Ministers No. 617, dated 7.9.2006, On Monitoring and Evaluation Indicators of Social Services Programmes.

The Working Group established to draft the action plan will monitor and evaluate the process.

Once the regional council of the municipality of Lezha adopts the Action Plan, it will be published and a copy will be distributed to all institutions and organisations which will be invited to provide information from their perspective, in line with the planned activities.

LAPREI will be printed and made available not only to local actors but also to international donors.

Following is a list of envisaged activities based on the above-mentioned information:

- Review of the LAPREI every semester, including information of the public;
- Drafting a progress report by a local expert assisted by the working group, after the implementation of the first semester of the LAPREI; this report is then submitted to the Mayor of Lezha.

The findings will be used to revise, as necessary, objectives and planned activities and improve them during the review phase.

Local and international NGOs and the civil society will serve as an advisory body.

Responsibilities of main units of the organisational structure

- **The Coordinator:** Coordinates, monitors and reports on the implementation of activities of the LAPs for the communities and chairs Working Group meetings.
- **The Secretariat** (Technical Working Group for Action Plan): Collects, administers and analyses materials of the working group, and forwards eventual decisions to the Coordinator. Prepares materials for the Coordinator, as necessary.
- **The Working Group (WG):** As part of the WG, representatives of the Municipality have the mandate to coordinate the implementation of the Action Plan and monitor and report on the progress made.

BACKGROUND OF ROMA AND EGYPTIAN COMMUNITIES IN ALBANIA

The Roma community has been living in Albania for more than 600 years. They arrived in Albania before the Ottoman invasion. Studies suggest that they have come from India, passing through the Balkans in Europe. Their origin is known more thanks to linguistic analysis rather than to accurate historic testimonies. During the Ottoman invasion, for safety reasons, Roma changed their religion and were converted into Muslims, following the example of a large part of the Albanian population at the time. During WWII, Roma in Albania were not persecuted in death camps, as was the case in many other countries of Eastern Europe. Many Roma in Albania fought in the war side by side with the Albanian army against foreign invaders. After the war, the Albanian state employed a policy of assimilation, considering the Roma as part of the Albanian population. It must be noted that during the communist regime, Roma benefited employment, benefited from the agrarian reform on land, security for the future, mandatory education, housing, etc., which helped their integration and mainstreaming with the rest of the population, despite the shortcomings of the system. To conform to the full employment policy, the Albanian state was obliged to employ both men and women alike, in accordance with the level of education and professional skills. After the fall of communism and introduction of democratic changes, the Roma were the first to lose their jobs, becoming part of the most vulnerable and marginalised groups of the society. Because of poor education and lack of skills, their position in the society changed drastically. With a few exceptions, because of the resulting poverty, the new generation of Roma children were unable to attend school, and abandoned them instead to work and contribute to their family income. They become victims of negative social phenomenon such as begging, prostitution, trafficking. To date, the economic situation and living conditions of Roma remain very poor, notably their very bad health and housing situation.⁵

The Egyptian community is among the oldest communities in Albania. Most of the members of this community are established in urban centres, although

⁵ National Strategy for the Improvement of Roma Living Conditions, 2003



a part of them lives in rural areas. They arrived in the Balkans during the reign of Alexander the Great, who upon return from Egypt to Macedonia, brought along Egyptians, who were not slaves but masters of ironworks.

Another wave of Egyptians arrived in the Balkans in 513, when Egypt was blighted by a series of deadly diseases, such as the plague, affecting most of the population. During these years, the Emperor issued an order for the civilian population to migrate and settle in other countries. Following the devastating earthquakes that ruined many Egyptian cities⁶ in the VI century, many Egyptians left the country and came to the Balkans. Egyptians were specialised in ironworks, working mainly as blacksmith, tinsmith, coppersmith, shoemakers and jewellery maker. In addition to metal processing and works, they were skilled in working with mud transforming it in bricks, roof tiles and items of art works.

In Lezha, Egyptians arrived around XVI century. They have paid particular attention to education and learning, depending however, on their economic conditions.

Today, many Egyptians hold a university degree, whereas others are in the process of obtaining one. Moreover, Egyptians work for the central or local administration, as well as for public utility enterprises, based on their professional skills. Many others, however, live in less than normal conditions, because a series of problems related to education, housing, employment, health care have not received due attention.

Roma and Egyptians in the Municipality of Lezha

In total, about 397 Roma and Egyptian households live in the Municipality of Lezha, i.e. 1,330 persons, out of 8,186 households living in total in the city of Lezha. This means about 5% of the population of the city of Lezha is composed of Roma and Egyptian community members.

The figures do not include Roma and Egyptian households that have emigrated, or households that have migrated elsewhere in the country to find better employment or better living place. Moreover, data⁷ indicate that 25 additional households are not presently living in Lezha or have emigrated abroad for economic and social reasons.

In Lezha, the Roma and Egyptian communities are concentrated in one part of the town; about 90% live in one area known as Skënderbeg neighbourhood,

⁶ De Soto H., Beddies S., Gedeshi I., *Romët dhe Egjiptianët në Shqipëri: Nga Përfshirje Sociale drejt Përfshirjes Sociale [Roma and Egyptians in Albania: from Social Exclusion to Social Inclusion]*, World Bank, 2005

⁷ Data collected through a questionnaire during the design of the Local Action Plan of the Municipality of Lezha, January 2013.

whereas 10% live in other neighbourhoods, respectively Besëlidhja, Spitali, Gurra and S.M.T.

A special thing about Lezha is that the two communities live together in all of the neighbourhoods. This serves as a model of interaction, on the other hand, it poses some difficulties to address and distinguish them as two separate communities. Moreover, the fact that the Roma community is concentrated in one neighbourhood and has not moved from one place to another has contributed to this community being treated and considered continuously as a factor, an cultural ethnic group, at times separately at times together with the Egyptian community. This comes because members of one community are in full harmony with the members of the other community; while there have also been instances of inter-marriages.

Statistics on Roma and Egyptian communities indicate that in Albania their poverty is a result of social exclusion and discrimination. Their poverty is multi-dimensional and persistent. The Roma and Egyptians in the city of Lezha live on low income and suffer from poor living conditions. They do not have access to public services, do not benefit from health care or education, have little or no access the labour market, civil registration or security of tenure.

Lack of potable water is considered as one of biggest problem after lack of food. The Roma live in overcrowded areas, with no access to essential equipment, sewage and water supply system. The Roma households live in huts or former state-owned abandoned buildings.

MAIN ASPECTS OF THE LOCAL ACTION PLAN

Education

The educational level of the Roma and Egyptians in Lezha began to deteriorate during the post-socialist transition period. In spite of the improvement in the 2000 compared to the 90s, their low education level and increasing gap vis-à-vis the majority population is one of the main causes of unemployment and poverty among them. Presently, 40.3% of the Roma and 12.7% Egyptian populations, 8 years old and above are illiterate.⁸

Some 61% of Roma and 57% of Egyptian households

⁸ Data collected through a questionnaire during the process of designing the Local Action Plan for the Municipality of Lezha, January 2013



report that they face difficulties with the education of their children. Roma and Egyptian parents list a number of causes that are related primarily to poverty. Difficulties to buy school items, lack of adequate clothing, poor living conditions and absence of infrastructure, care for younger family members, etc., are some of the obstacles standing in the way of the children's education. There are, however, institutional obstacles in addition to those related to the Roma tradition and culture.

Pre-school education is necessary and irreplaceable for a child's education. Collected data reveal that 21% of Roma and 65% of Egyptian children aged 3 to 6 years old attend kindergarten but do not continue preschool classes assigned for children from 5-6 years old. Those who have attended kindergarten adapt better to the school environment and face less difficulties in learning the concepts. Preschool education is also a key step to learn properly the Albanian language. Including all

(3 teachers are involved in this project) consisting in offering a second chance for the mandatory education to persons that have dropped out for various reasons, and their age is inappropriate to be integrated in classes with other children that attend school in public 9-year schools. The gathered information does not indicate the presence of any illiterate person above 18 years of age who is part of this project.

A very small percentage of children make it to high school; this is thanks to the support of a foreign donor for five of them, hence enabling the children to attend private schools. On the other hand, only six attend the public high school.

Data on the Roma and Egyptian communities in Lezha⁹ reveal that out of seven persons that have completed high school in the last two years, none made it to higher education. The reasons for this do not depend on their performance at school, but rather to the economic situa-

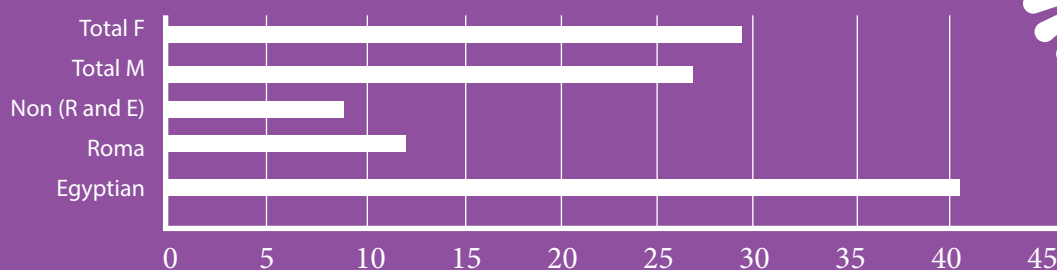


Table 1. Kindergarten attendance by Roma and Egyptian children according to gender, and in total

children in the preschool system, which is mandatory for all households, should also be one of the priorities in relevant education policies. Children between 5-6 years of age are reportedly not attending preschool. The reason for not attending is that in the preschool system no lunch is provided and parents would rather send their

tion of their households. Of them, three have applied to the REF (Roma Education Fund), but none of them seems to have succeeded. Another reason is lack of information for application opportunities and difficulties with the completion of application documents.

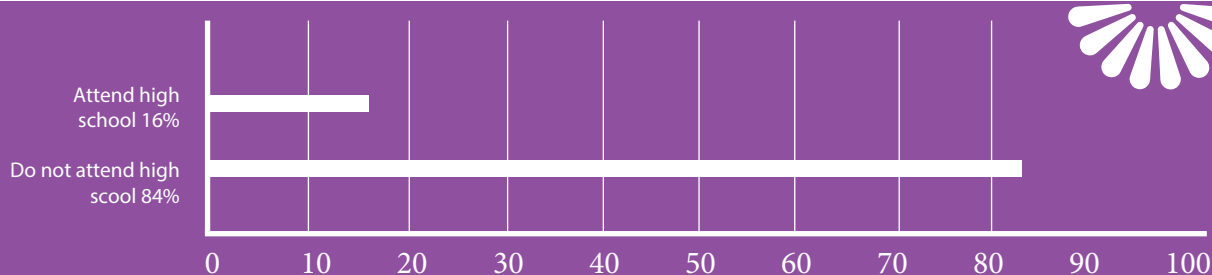


Table 2. High school attendance

children to the kindergarten to have a meal there. In Lezha a project called "Second Chance" is implemented

⁹ Data collected through a questionnaire during the process of designing the Local Action Plan for the Municipality of Lezha, January 2013



Under these circumstances, recommendations for policies related to the education of the Roma and Egyptian communities may be summarised as follows:

- Due to poverty, many Roma students do not have the required conditions at home to study and make their homework properly. In addition, because of the low educational level, parents cannot help their children in their studies, unlike the other children. Others are obliged to work to contribute to family income. Therefore, in schools where Roma and Egyptian children study, special programmes must be in place, students (of all ethnic groups), may study in a convenient time in school premises and under the care and with the assistance of dedicated and qualified teachers (e.g. after regular school classes). A new practice that may be suggested is the engagement of student teachers, who may help groups of Roma and Egyptian students. The proper conditions and qualified assistance would help the students of these communities and those of the majority to overcome deficiencies and achieve higher results. Such a successful experience has been recorded in some countries of the Roma Decade initiative (such as: Hungary, Bulgaria, etc.).
- Books and other school items should continue to be provided free of charge to Roma and Egyptian children. A new experience would be providing a free meal, starting with the poor Roma and Egyptian communities. In addition, in some villages or outskirts and urban areas, where Roma settlements are far from the schools, regular and free transportation should be available for students of these communities.
- Another policy to be pursued is strengthening the cultural identity of Roma and Egyptian students. The strengthened identity would help Roma and Egyptian students in a better integration process. In this sense, it would be useful that some school books, such as that of history, geography and literature, make mention of Roma and Egyptian communities. This would boost respect for diversity and raise the awareness of students about the existence of different ethnic groups and about the culture of other groups. Moreover, in extracurricular activities, trained teachers should speak to their students about the history and culture of Roma and Egyptians in Albania. On the other hand, strengthening the cultural identity of Roma and Egyptian students would improve the positive approach of students to schooling. This has been implemented in some schools of Korça and Gjirokastra, but the experience should be applied and piloted to other areas as well.
- Designing curricula and training teachers on Roma and Egyptian history and culture, first in schools where Roma and Egyptian students study are indispensable activities. This may be realised in the short-term through intensive training by experts. In the medium and long-term, it may be solved by introducing new curricula and subjects in Universities that train future teachers.
- According to data gathered from parents and students, some school teachers do not treat Roma and Egyptian students on equal terms with the other students. Consequently, educational policies should aim at training teachers to work in multi-cultural classes, know the cultural values and rights of other ethnic groups, know the needs of marginalised groups and be capable to treat all students in such terms that essential equality is guaranteed.
- Under the current conditions, for many Roma and Egyptian parents long-term benefits of education remain questionable compared to the immediate and superficial benefits from the employment of their children in the informal sector, hence dropping out of school. This low perception of long-term benefits, as a result of limited employment opportunities in the public sector and formal private sector, contributes to the demotivation of Roma and Egyptian students for better results in school. One of the potential policies in this case would be raising awareness of both students and parents on success stories of individuals from these communities. Roma and Egyptian university students, experts and professionals from the private or public sector may serve as an example for the students and their parents, showing their achievements, education, employment and aspirations.
- Talented Roma and Egyptian students that come from poor households should be supported with scholarships to continue their studies onto the secondary and higher education



cycles. These scholarships, which should be administered and monitored by public institutions, would motivate talented and successful students (starting from the primary education cycle) and help them through in the difficult social and economic conditions.

- Furthermore, university scholarships – for which public institutions may cooperate with international organisations – would have a huge impact on providing higher education and creating the conditions for empowering Roma and Egyptian elites. Some of such scholarships may be given as priority ones especially for study programmes that are pertinent to the needs of the Roma and Egyptian communities (teaching, medicine, etc.).
- Preschool education should expand to reach other Roma and Egyptian children, to include all children free of charge and possibly in kindergartens that provide lunch. In these kindergartens, Roma and Egyptian children may learn Albanian from dedicated Roma and Egyptian teachers/educators.
- Unlike many other countries in Central and Eastern Europe, during socialism, the phenomenon of segregating Roma and Egyptian children in special schools and classes was not a feature (at all) of the Albanian education system. This phenomenon is being observed, however, in the post-socialist era in some schools and kindergartens. Subsequently, education authorities should contribute to sensitising school institutions on negative long-term consequences of segregation. They may have do this by in-

troducing such education policies so that this sporadic phenomenon does not become solid. Some successful desegregation experiences in some countries of the Roma Decade may be applied in schools where this phenomenon is noted.

EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

Survey data below indicate that the Roma and Egyptians suffer from high unemployment rates. Almost 1/3 of them have been unemployed for more than 1 year. The percentage of the registered unemployed is very low (20.7% Roma and 29.9% Egyptians). About 90% of the Roma and Egyptians do not have a proper job contract and do not pay social insurance.

Roma and Egyptians provide a number of reasons related to the high unemployment rates. According to them, they relate to “lack of employment opportunities for all” in the city of Lezha, “low education level” and “ethnicity”.

As a result of poverty and social exclusion by the formal labour market, the Roma and Egyptians work in the informal market, mainly collecting scrap, selling second hand clothes, occasional unskilled work and construction (begging is also widely spread). Nonetheless, they do not earn sufficient income for their households. Even so, such income is downward, hence causing a severe emotional and stressful situation. Consequently, unless new alternatives are developed, the expected living conditions and welfare is seriously threatened.

The number of self-employed persons in the informal market, who do not pay social insurance or are not licenced is as follows:

Activity	Quantity	Unit	Frequency
Selling second hand clothes	18	persons	Every day
Picking waste tin/steel	27	"	ad. hoc
Painting (houses)	3	"	ad. hoc
Begging	7	"	Every day
Extracting fish food	7	"	Seasonal (only in summer)
Welding	6	"	ad. hoc
Cleaning at local government units (cleaners)	5	"	Every day (2 hrs. daily)
Guarding premises (security guards)	1	"	Every day
Hair dresser	2	"	Unavailable
Plumbing	3	"	ad. hoc
Music entertainment	10	"	Seasonal (only in summer)
Bricklayers	4	"	ad. hoc
Fish sale	4	"	Unavailable
Various activities	56	"	

Table 3. Activities of informal self-employed





Latest data on employment in Lezha for Roma and Egyptian communities:

Within working age		757 persona				
		E	R	Mix	M	F
Unemployed	699	496	161	42	335	364
Employed	58	53	3	2	35	23

Table 4. Situation of employment by ethnicity and gender

	%	E	R	Miks	M	F
Unemployed	92,40	90,34	98,17	95,46	90,54	94,05
Employed	7,60	9,66	1,83	4,45	9,46	5,95

Table 5. Situation of employment by ethnicity and gender, in percentage

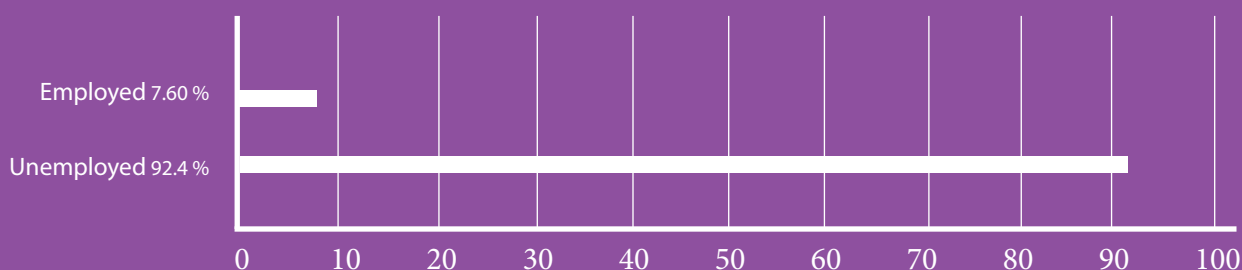


Table 6. Situation of employment total for Roma and Egyptians, in percentage

The diagram shows that the unemployed have the highest share; only 7.60 % of the Roma and Egyptian population are employed, whereas 92,40 % of the population are unemployed. These are alarming data, and concrete measures must be taken to address this situation.

Lezha has no vocational training centre that would help the young Roma and Egyptians develop their vocational skills. The absence of such a centre, contributes to the deterioration of unemployment situation for the Roma and Egyptian youths. At present, state vocational training for Lezha is provided by the Vocational Training Centre in Shkodra. Due to the distance and cost of transportation, young Roma and Egyptians from Lezha cannot attend these training courses, and therefore are not able to develop their vocational skills.

There is only a sewing training course for women. This centre is licenced to provide this service. Training sessions are delivered three times a week three hours each. The usual course duration is six months. The intended target group is women from households in need, mainly those that are entitled to the unemployment benefit.

While available to anyone, no Roma or Egyptian woman attends this course. One of the reasons is the lack of education among the Roma and Egyptian community members, and hence they have problems with making the necessary technical calculations (e.g. of clothes, etc.).

Taking into account the current situation, following are some recommendations on employment policies for Roma and Egyptian community members:

1. Vocational training is indispensable for members of both communities in accordance with the labour market needs, and their individual needs. This may be preceded by a needs assessment effort to determine the labour market needs, which findings would then help design a vocational training programme.
2. According to survey data, an increasing number of Roma and Egyptian community members



are involved in collecting scrap iron and tins. This is also related to their internal migration to other cities or to seasonal migration.

Another solution for employment and higher income for Roma and Egyptian community members would be creating social businesses. Such businesses could have as partners, in addition to Roma and Egyptian community members, the Municipality/Commune or a banking institution. A foundation could initially carry out a study for the start-up of the social business and eventually manage the project. The benefit for Roma and Egyptian community members and households would be employment and better work conditions, higher income, formalization of the business and better access to services and social insurance. Income would be higher thanks to direct sale of products collected by primary entrepreneurs, hence avoiding the intermediaries, who take a significant chunk of the profit.

Employment of Roma and Egyptian community members should be at the focus of the local government to gradually replace "unemployment compensation payments" for these groups – in a second stage – as a result of improved employment. Employment in social businesses may be conditioned also by the lack of possibility to send children to kindergartens or schools. In additions, local government units would organise a better recycling of urban waste. In the case of this social business, a warehouse could be made available for collecting scrap iron, as well as vehicles for their transportation.

The banking institution would serve to make the proper financial adjustments to run the business and would save, for each member/family of the Roma and Egyptian communities, a share of the income. Such income could be used also to pay the instalments for social housing. If this initiative becomes a success, it may be extended to other sectors and areas across the country.

3. Crediting schemes that provide a package including credit and training for the business, through specialised institutions, may be applied as a strategy for Roma and Egyptian community members, who have started up a small business or are self-employed. This strategy may be extended also to those community

members that return from emigration and may have earned certain skills, which may be used to start up a business in Albania.

Returning emigrants

In parallel to people migrating, many emigrants are returning home, an accelerating trend in the past two years because of the worsening financial and economic crisis in Europe, particularly in Greece. Interviews reveal that returning home is an alternative that is broadly discussed among Roma/Egyptian migrants and some of them have started to organise themselves in this regard. There are two scenarios of potential consequences of an expedited return of Roma/Egyptian migrants. The first scenario is that returning migrants, especially those who do not have financial or human capital resources, because of the unskilled and informal work, might increase pressures on the labour market. In the absence of employment, many Roma and Egyptians – mainly in urban areas – would revert to the informal sector, especially scrap iron collection, leading to the eventual reduction of income for households that are working in this sector. This would drive up the poverty levels for many Roma/Egyptian households.

The second scenario, despite involving a small part of Roma and Egyptian community members, is more optimistic and relates to transferring to the country of origin financial human and social capital obtained in the host country where they had migrated. Investment of such capital would open up new employment opportunities, first of all for own Roma and Egyptian family members. Earlier experiences in Albania have shown that some returning emigrants have started small businesses, mainly in the services sector. This scenario, however, requires an existing favourable economic, social and institution environment in Albania. It may be favoured by crediting with soft lending terms for businesses started by returning migrants, training programmes and support for their businesses, micro-credit programmes for rural areas, establishment of investment consulting agencies, establishment of strengthening of employment agencies, etc.

Taking into account the current situation, following are some recommendations on returning emigrants from Roma and Egyptian communities:

1. Internal and international migration is one of the main mechanisms that Roma and Egyptians use



to cope with their poverty and social exclusion. It is one of the primary factors that distinguishes between a 'very poor' household and a 'poor' one. Nevertheless, migration has not yielded long-term benefits for many Roma and Egyptian households and has not helped them out of the poverty cycle.

2. Although the indicator of potential migration of Roma and Egyptians is low, the Municipality, NGOs working on Roma and Egyptian-related areas/issues and specialised institutions should organise awareness-raising campaigns in Roma and Egyptian settlements on the possibilities and risks of migration, employment, official channels of remittance transfers, etc. This would mitigate the migration and return cycles.
3. Vocational training for Roma and Egyptians in their home-place would contribute to more employment opportunities and income generation in the host country. Interviews reveal that the majority of potential migrants prefer vocational, linguistic and cultural training. Moreover, the MSWY should give priority to agreements with similar or specialised institutions to include Roma and Egyptian community members in various schemes for seasonal employment abroad. This would encourage Roma and Egyptians community members to improve their work skills, consequently increasing their chances for employment and providing ground for reducing poverty in many households.
4. Generally, Roma and Egyptians migrate together with their households. Many of them, however, have left behind their parents, who live abandoned in extreme poverty (many of them do not benefit have a pension or any other alternative source of income). One policy for this issue would be revising the social *assistance entitlement*, which should be given despite family members being emigrants. In addition, through mobile medical teams, the Municipality should provide constant health care for them.
5. With the deterioration of the economic and financial crisis, in particular in Greece and Italy, the Municipality of Lezha should be prepared for a potential return of Roma/Egyptians, and eventually higher demand for social services (schooling for children, improved infrastructure in the areas where they live, health care, unemployment benefits/social assistance, etc.).
6. Returning Roma and Egyptian migrants, who

have financial and human resources should be encouraged to invest in the local economy. The Municipality should encourage them to partake in crediting schemes, vocational training, business orientation, etc.

HOUSING AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Housing: Though there are 49 homeless Roma and Egyptian households, only 37 are registered as such in the Municipality of Lezha. There are 42 housing units that need immediate restoration, and 29 other that may be renovated later. The areas where the need is more immediate are: "Skënderbeg" neighbourhood, apartment building No16, where 8 households live; "Skënderbeg" block, throughout the block, 5 apartments; "Skënderbeg" block, Drini riverbank, 9 households; "Besëlidhja" block, behind the stadium, 8 households and 7 households behind "Gjergj Fishta" school; "Gurra" block, 5 households. The "Skënderbeg" block, by the riverbank, faces problems with the sewage canal, 550 m long, and 1.5 m wide; Skënderbeg" block, apt. building No16, needs sewage canal 150 m long and 1 m wide; "Besëlidhja" block, behind "Gjergj Fishta" school, 1.5 km long sewage and white waters canals; "Besëlidhja" block, across from "Hydajet Lezha" high school, faces numerous problems, that is problems throughout the area where Roma and Egyptian communities live. Along a kilometre for canals, asphaltting, water supply system and the entire infrastructure needs restoration. Besëlidhja block, behind the stadium, is a particular case, where 10 households live in shacks.

Power supply: There are no problems with the power supply in the neighbourhoods where Roma and Egyptian community members live. In all the blocks, installations are in place for supplying electricity; the main problem, however, is with paying the energy bill due to high and unaffordable figures. The reason is that most of the households are beneficiaries of the social assistance scheme and, in most cases, the bill is higher than what they get from the scheme. A five-member family gets ALL 5,400 or month or ALL 1,080 per person per month (ALL 36 per day).

Infrastructure: There are problems with infrastructure, respectively in "Skënderbeg" block, "Thertore" Street, which needs asphaltting 350 m long and 3.5 m wide; in "Skënderbeg" block, at the entrance, street lighting is needed along 1.5 km; in "Besëlidhja" block, after Blv. "Gjergj Fishta", 1.5 km asphaltting and lighting and



green space is needed; and in “Besëlidhja” block, behind the stadium, 1 km asphalt, green space and lighting is needed.

Legalisation: Out of 39 buildings that have problems with legalisation, 10 have problems related to land plot property, whereas the interested party has not applied for legalisation. Households in “Besëlidhja” block, across from “Hydajet Lezha” high school live in shacks and do not meet the application criteria. The rest is throughout the “Skënderbeg” block and by the Drini riverbank, having problems with legalisation, subject to legalisation for failure to obtain the property certificate because they do not have the money to pay the fee envisaged in the law. In “Gurra” block, there are 5 households having problems with land ownership; they have applied and have not received a property certificate yet. In the Municipality of Lezha, there are 50 households that live in apartments and need to privatise them. This figure includes both those that are currently subject to privatisation and those that have not started the privatisation process. The reason for not starting privatisation procedures is lack of documentation; for those that have started the process, the reason is lack of money to pay for the fee, hence no privatisation certificate.

Fifteen households are in the process of legalising their dwellings, 5 households have benefited from social housing sponsored by Caritas-Lezha in cooperation with the Municipality, in two rented apartments, and 2 households are sponsored by the Municipality of Lezha. The total number of registered households in need of social housing is 37.

Taking into account the current situation, the following are some recommendations on housing and infrastructure for Roma and Egyptian communities:

- Adopt the criteria for social housing, transfer of residence and provision of legal assistance by the state, taking into consideration the situation of most Roma and Egyptian households, who work in informal sectors and may not certify their income, live in shacks and do not have a lease contract or property certificate for their houses, or need administrative and legal assistance for access to their basic rights.
- Given that in the absence of a lease act/property certificate, it is impossible to prove the residence of a person by self-declaration, an alternative document would be a certificate issued by a non-governmental organisation, which may eventually assume the responsibility to provide a mailing address (mail box), where the person is supposed to receive the mail. Moreover, various



offices of the local government administration (closest civil registry office) condition the issue of such official documents e (certificate of residence, family civil registry certificate, etc.) with the payment of local taxes. According to sources from the Ministry of Interior it has often denounced this practice for having no legal grounds; the practice, however, continues. Subsequently, many poor households and most Roma (who are not exempted from local taxes as they are not in social benefits/economic assistance lists), may not obtain the required documentation. Therefore it is necessary that initiatives be taken to provide for the issuance of documents for Roma individuals even when they are not in social or unemployment benefit lists.

- Assess the situation on a case-by-case basis, so that (after the assessment) Roma and Egyptian households that have been living in poor areas on public land, may be given the land first ‘*in use*’ and after a period of time ‘*as land with infrastructure*’, in accordance with the relevant legal provisions. In these land plots, Roma households may build their homes conform to low cost housing standards, as set forth by local government units. When it is not possible to give to Roma and Egyptian households the land plot where they are settled and have erected their shacks, according to the formula of ‘*land property with infrastructure*’, local government units should take measures to build low-cost housing, which they administer and give in use to households in need, conform to specified contractual terms.
- Prepare, adapt, distribute and promote relevant information regarding the legislation in force that sets out procedure for access to housing in competence of municipalities/communes.



The number of Roma and Egyptian community members that have applied for communal housing is surprisingly low – less than one in seven. Although they are free to assess their needs and act accordingly, almost half of the respondents mention lack of information about their rights as an obstacle.

- Assist Roma during the processes regarding enforcement of legislation on their housing. Having no access to information and specialised assistance, they risk losing the possibility to become owners and run the risk of being evicted by property developers, who are better informed in this regard.
- Take into consideration providing the selected places with appropriate services by the municipalities/communes. In other words, clean water supply and proper health and sanitation conditions, given the high number of Roma and Egyptian community members that live in shacks and their frequent mobility, and the lack of adequate infrastructure in the areas where they live.
- Finally, the data gathered in this section do not seem to match the general public perception on Roma and Egyptian communities, as “nomads” or “on the move”. Most of Roma and Egyptians who are owners of their housing units, combined to the very low number of individuals that have moved over the past 12 months – 1.1% for Egyptians and 6.5% for Roma – point to more stable communities compared to the stereotype of those who live in caravans, constantly on the move. The above-mentioned arguments have their implications for public authorities and the relevant policies and actions that need to be taken.

HEALTH CARE

In Lezha, the health situation for Roma and Egyptians is much poorer compared to the majority of the population, as reflected also to their relatively lower longevity. Reasons for this not so appropriate health situation relate to poverty, difficult living conditions and lack of basic infrastructure, limited access to health care services, poor education and some forms of discrimination. Overall, health care centres are not far from the settlements. However, only 58% of Roma and 76% of Egyptians report they have the so-called health care booklet and receive services at the health care centre. One of the reasons is poverty, which renders households unable to pay for health insurance. Moreover, 37% of

Roma and 20% of Egyptians respond they do not know where the healthcare booklet is issued and are unaware of procedures. Informal payments, according to 83% of Roma and Egyptian respondents, are another obstacle to accessing services.

Roma and Egyptian children represent the sub-group that is most at risk with regard to health. This is mainly due to malnutrition, difficult life conditions, lack of prenatal health care and preventive care, poor education, marriage and giving birth at a very young age. The health of pregnant women is another big concern. Due to the absence of family planning, the number of abortions for unwanted pregnancy remains high.

Apparently, no programmes have been organised on reproductive health targeting Roma and Egyptian community members that live in Lezha. Even if the local health care department has organised such programmes, Roma and Egyptian community members have not participated in them.

In some blocks where Roma and Egyptian community members live, there are health hazards. In this sense, in “Besëlidhja” block, across from “Hydajet Lezha” high school, these persons live in shacks and lack the proper sanitation infrastructure for personal needs; in “Skënderbeg” block, apt. building No 16, the residents have shared sanitation infrastructure for personal needs, and among others, it is located next to the sewage, and the systems seems to be damaged; as well as a series of other objects such as warehouses converted into dwellings, state-owned facilities, etc., where four households live in the absence of total sanitation infrastructure for personal needs.

Taking into account the current situation, following are some recommendations on the health situation of Roma and Egyptian communities:

- Many Roma do not benefit from the health services because they are not aware of the fact that their health situation requires medical treatment. In this case, health care policies should aim to educate and raise awareness of these groups on the basic health conditions. These activities may take place in schools, health care centres or through regular visits to these communities by the health care providers. Health education according to experiences in other countries, should be delivered in plain and understandable language and in line with the needs of these communities. This requires preliminary training of health care teams on the particularities of the Roma and Egyptian communities (living conditions and lifestyle,



culture, mobility, etc.).

- Some poor and poorly educated communities may be reached out by health care coordinators, who may help the Roma and Egyptians with health care booklets and other necessary documents, encourage them to consult doctors, promote child immunization campaigns, health education and family planning activities, etc.
- Many individuals from the Roma and Egyptian communities, such as children younger than 16 years old, pregnant women, pensioners, unemployed, and in social benefit lists, do not have access to health service, although they are insured, because they are not informed or do not know where to go to obtain the necessary documents (e.g. health care booklets). In this case, the target should be to raise their awareness and assist them to obtain such documents.
- Many Roma and Egyptian households, because of unemployment and poverty, migrate internally for a short or longer time. In many cases, they establish informal settlements with no basic infrastructure; they live in tents or shacks in extreme poverty. Almost none of these households benefit from health services in health care centres because they are not registered with the civil registration office. In this case, the aim should be to provide these households with electronic health cards, so that they may benefit from health care services.
- Furthermore, health care centres close to Roma and Egyptian communities should promote family planning through training, information and free distribution of modern contraception.

SOCIAL INCLUSION AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

The poverty level of Roma and Egyptian households is very high and the gap compared to the majority population has been widening. Poor and very poor Roma and Egyptian households face higher levels of social exclusion, because they are less skilled to cope with the needs of everyday life and have fewer opportunities to participate in processes that would contribute to the improvement of their lives, such as employment and education.

Many poverty-stricken Roma and Egyptian households should also be supported with alternative sources of income such as: social assistance, retirement pensions, unemployment benefits, disability payments and pensions for orphaned children. If on the one hand, the financial transfers by the government are not enough to meet the family needs, on the other hand, many Roma and Egyptian households are exempted from either benefiting from state assistance altogether or from benefiting for as long as necessary. Consequently, we come to the paradigm of social assistance, being designated for the poor, but often ‘the poorest of the poor’ may not benefit from it.

Taking into account the current situation, following are some recommendations on welfare and social services for Roma and Egyptian communities:

- Regarding the social assistance scheme, the recommendation is for the scheme to include

Number of Roma and Egyptian community members that benefit from social services provided in Lezha is as follows:

People with disabilities	54	Persons
Caretakers for people with disabilities	3	Persons
Paraplegic and tetraplegic	2	Persons
Caretakers for paraplegic and tetraplegic	2	Persons
Visually impaired persons	1	Persons
Caretakers for the visually-impaired persons	1	Persons
Retired individuals	50	Persons
Work invalids	32	Persons
Invalids benefiting compensation	198	Households

Table 7. Social services beneficiaries.





members of Roma and Egyptian communities taking into account their special needs and lifestyle. In this regard, the scheme should take into account the fact that they move frequently from one region to another, and they should not be excluded from the scheme because they do not have a permanent residence.

- Qualitative data (interviews and focus groups) show that many Roma and Egyptian households migrate for a short period internally. Hence, social assistance benefits should be transferable to the new location where the Roma family is settled, so as to reduce costs for obtaining it.
- Another possibility would be to provide information and practical assistance to Roma and Egyptian community members to fill out relevant documents for social assistance benefits. This is necessary as a good part of Roma – less so the Egyptians – are illiterate and may not provide the documentation on their own.
- About retirement pensions, one initiative that the government could take is to create a scheme for the volunteer contribution for the remaining years until full retirement entitlement. This measure would have to include the Roma and Egyptians that have been employed by or have worked for former state enterprises during socialism. Assistance for the preparation of the documentation should be given also for cases of retirement pension for elderly Roma and Egyptians.
- Awareness-raising campaigns should be organised on pensions, pension schemes and their importance in old age. They may be organised by NGOs working on Roma and Egyptian areas, in their communities.
- Assistance and services to fill out the forms should also be provided for disability payments and orphaned pension entitlements (both for biological and social orphans).
- Finally, additional steps should be taken to register new-born babies and obtain birth certificates so that they may be included in the system and be able to benefit all the assistance and services they are entitled to.

CULTURAL HERITAGE

The Constitution of the Republic of Albania, which is the fundamental document on the protection of rights and freedoms for all citizens not only confirms the willingness of the Albanian government to protect fundamental human rights and freedoms, and human dignity and personality (preamble), but also guarantees to national minorities the exercise of human rights and freedoms in full equality before the law and the free expression of their ethnicity, culture etc. (Article 20).

The United Nations General Assembly in December 1992 adopted through its Resolution 47/135, Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities. The Declaration envisaged the obligation for the States to protect the existence and identity of minorities within their respective territories.

Some of the rights of persons belonging to minorities are: the right to cultivate their culture, profess and practice their religion, use their language and participate effectively in cultural, religious, social, economic and public life, as well as in decision-making concerning the minority to which they belong, to establish and supervise their own associations, establish and maintain, without any discrimination, contacts with those to whom they are related by national or ethnic, religious or linguistic ties.

In addition, in 1992, the Council of Europe approved the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. The Charter affirms that protection and promotion of regional or minority languages in the different countries and regions of Europe represent an important contribution to the building of a Europe based on the principles of democracy and cultural diversity within the framework of national sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Direct contacts with the Roma and Egyptian communities in the city of Lezha reveal that so far, no cultural or artistic activities have been organised inspired by their folklore and traditions. However, the Region of Lezha and the National Centre of Culture have enabled celebrations for the summer day with the Roma community.

In addition, no entertaining programmes or sports events have been organised to boost mutual and inter-cultural understanding and respect between Roma and Egyptian children and other children.

Cultural rights and cultural diversity are essential ele-



ments for promoting human development. Therefore, it is necessary to implement inter-sectorial policies whereby all society members may exercise their rights. This is the only way to equalise social, economic and cultural imbalances that fragmentise the society. These policies should be built on the acceptability of diversity as part of development and should take into account the cultural identity, a notion that is very broad and dynamic.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The bases for the Local Action Plan for Roma and Egyptian communities is the domestic legislation and international standards acknowledged by the Albanian state, as well as all the policies of the Government of Albania in the framework of inclusion for Roma and Egyptian communities. Existing reports or relevant documents prepared by LGUs, and data collected in the field on their actual situation in the city of Lezha are the foundations on which this document is developed.

The legislation referred to for this plan is:

- Constitution of the Republic of Albania, amended;
- Law No 8652, dated 31.7.2000, On the organization and functioning of Local Government, amended;
- Decision of the Council of Ministers No 437, dated 08.04.2008, "Accession in the Declaration on the Roma Inclusion Decade;
- Instruction No. 1, dated 02.02.2007 of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities "On the implementation of the Decision of the Council of Ministers No. 563, date 12.08.2005 On Identifying the Responsibilities of the Region for the Social Services Delivery, according to paragraph 15 therein: "... municipalities/communes every quarter shall send information to the Regional social assistance and services unit, pursuant to DCoM No 617, dated 07.09.2006 "On monitoring and evaluation indicators of social protection programmes".
- Decision of the Council of Ministers No. 617, dated 7.9.2006, On Monitoring and Evaluation Indicators of Social Services Programmes.

This document is in line with:

- National Strategy "For improving Roma living conditions in Albania;
- OSCE's Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti Within the OSCE Area;
- National Action Plan on Roma inclusion decade, 2010-2015;
- Operational recommendations from the workshop on the Roma and Egyptian inclusion in the framework of Albania's European integration;
- Other national and international strategic documents.



DECISION OF THE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL for the adoption of the LOCAL ACTION PLAN (2013-2015)

REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA

MUNICIPAL COUNCIL OF LEZHA

DECISION

No 51, dated 09/08/2013

Adopting the Local Action Plan of the Municipality of Lezha for Roma and Egyptians integration 2013-2015 **In line with Law No 8652, dated 31.07.2000 On the organisation and functioning of local government, Article 8, paragraph 4 Economic development rights**, in the framework of efforts for exercising its legal function and to promote and support economic development in our Municipality, for an effective and efficient use of human, natural, social, institutional, financial and physical resources for establishing a friendly environment for the Roma and Egyptian communities, businesses and visitors,

The Municipal Council of Lezha, after a detailed examination of the Local Action Plan of the Municipality of Lezha on Roma and Egyptians Integration 2013 -2015, in the framework of the EU-funded Best Practices for Roma Integration Project, implemented by OSCE ODIHR and the Municipality of Lezha, presented by the Mayor, following the discussion of council members,

DECIDED

- I. To adopt the local action plan of the Municipality of Lezha for Roma and Egyptians integration 2013-2015 (document attached herein)**
- II. The Mayor is responsible for the effectiveness of this decision**
- III. This Decision shall enter into force 10 days after its announcement.**

**SECRETARY
CHAIRPERSON
GJOK CARI
[signature]**

**AGOSTIN MARKU
[signature and stamp]**



REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA
PREFECT OF LEZHA REGION

No. 817/4 Prot.

Lezha, on 21.08.2013

TO: Municipal Council of Lezha

Mr. Viktor TUSHAJ

Mayor, Municipality of Lezha

Pursuant to Article 14 of Law 8927 dated 25.07.2002 On the Prefect, in accordance with Law No 8652, dated 31.07.2000 On the organisation and functioning of local government, Law No 8485, dated 12.05.1999 On the Code of Administrative Procedures in the Republic of Albania, and Decision of the Council of Ministers No 342. Dated 12.03.2008 On The National Strategy for Development and Integration, I hereby confirm the legality grounds of Decision No 51, dated 09.08.2013 On the implementation of the Local Action Plan of the Municipality of Lezha for Roma and Egyptians integration 2013-2015.

PREFECT
PAL DAJÇI
[signature and stamp]



ANNUAL ACTION PLAN FRAMEWORK FOR ROMA AND EGYPTIANS 2013 – 2015

Priority area: Education							
Strategic purpose: Improve the education situation for Roma and Egyptian communities							
ACTIVITIES	INDICATORS	Source of data	Responsible Authority	Monitoring	Timeline	Funds	
						Preliminary assessment	Potential source
Objective 1: Guarantee Roma and Egyptian children the right to equal access to all levels of the education system							
1.1 Create and/or improve the statistical data in the area of education that enable analysis of the education situation of Roma and Egyptian children in Lezha.	1.1.1 Creation of statistics that provide data about the education of Roma and Egyptian communities.	Information from the Regional Education Directorate of Lezha.	Regional Education Directorate	Ministry of Education and Science	2013 - 2015	No budget	Education Fund for Roma OSFA.
1.2 Provide counselling in schools and kindergartens to Roma and Egyptian parents about the rights and obligations for children's educational development.	1.2.1 Number of teachers/specialists trained to counsel Roma and Egyptian parents. 1.2.2 Number of public awareness campaigns organized by the Regional Education Directorate with Roma and Egyptian parents. 1.2.3 Number of Roma and Egyptian parents that participated in these campaigns.	Reports from the Regional Education Directorate	Regional Education Directorate, Specialised Roma and Egyptian NGOs		2013 - 2015		State Budget for Ministry of Education and Science, 3 million per year at the national level.
1.3 Develop individual education activities for children with difficulties communicating in Albanian in order to help them integrate in the mandatory education system.	1.3.1 Number of Roma and Egyptian children aged 3-5 registered in kindergartens. 1.3.2 Number of Roma and Egyptian children registered in preparatory classes. 1.3.3 Number of Roma and Egyptian children who start the mandatory education following kindergarten.	Reports from the Regional Education Directorate, and specialised Roma and Egyptian NGOs.	Reports from the Regional Education Directorate, and specialised Roma and Egyptian NGOs.		2013 - 2015		State Budget for Ministry of Education and Science, 2 million per year at the national level.



1.4 Regular implementation of the well-funded program "Second Chance" for children who have left the regular mandatory education schools.	1.4.1 Number of initiated "Second Chance" classes. 1.4.2 Number of Roma and Egyptian children registered in "Second Chance" classes. 1.4.3 Number of Roma and Egyptian children compared to the total number of children who benefited from the "Second Chance" classes.	Progress Report of "Second Chance" Program.	Regional Education Directorate, Roma and Egyptian NGOs	Ministry for Education and Science	2013 - 2015	State Budget for Ministry of Education and Science, Donors, 10 million lekë per year at the national level.
1.5 Provide free of charge school texts and other stationeries for Roma and Egyptian children who attend the mandatory education, and who come from poor families.	1.5.1 Number of school texts provided every year to Roma and Egyptian students. 1.5.2 Number of Roma and Egyptian children who benefit free of charge school texts and stationeries per year. 1.5.3 The funds allocated every year to subsidies for school texts and stationeries for Roma and Egyptian children.	Information from school directorates.	Regional Education School Directorates.	Ministry Of Education and Science	2013 - 2015	State Budget for Ministry of Education and Science (30 million lekë per year at the national level).
1.6. Provide supplementary classes in various subjects to meet the needs of Roma and Egyptian children to help them reach a normal progress.	1.6.1. Number of Roma and Egyptian children who attend the optional classes (by schools).	Information from school directorates.	Regional Education School Directorates.	Ministry for Education and Science	2013 - 2015	State Budget for Ministry of Education and Science Regional Education Directorate of Lezha
Objective 2: Eliminate Exclusive and Humiliating behaviour towards Roma and Egyptians in the school community and transform cultural diversity into a source of knowledge and an atmosphere of mutual respect, tolerance, and understanding						
2.1 Introduce requirements in the internal regulations and job descriptions of personnel in pre-university institutions that ensure respect and non-humiliating behaviour towards Roma and Egyptian children, creating thus an inclusive atmosphere for them.	2.1.1 Regulations of pre-university institutions of all levels ensure a respectful treatment of Roma and Egyptians. 2.1.2 Job descriptions of the education personnel at all levels reflect the requirement for treating Roma and Egyptians with respect and dignity.	Regional Education Directorates, School Directorates.	Regional Education Directorates/ Education Office	Ministry of Education and Science	2013 - 2015	No budget



2.2 Organize social and inter-cultural activities with students and parents belonging to both Roma and Egyptian communities and the rest of the population in order to increase understanding between Roma and Egyptian and non-Roma and non-Egyptian children.	2.2.1 Number of schools organizing inter-cultural activities. 2.2.2 Number of organized inter-cultural activities. 2.2.3 Number of students involved in these activities.	Information from school directorates.	Regional Education Directorates/ Education Office, school directorate	Regional Education Directorates	2013 - 2015	2013 - 2015	No budget	School budget Donors
2.3 Ensure the participation of Roma and Egyptian parents in parent boards or other school governing bodies.	2.3.1 Number of parent boards where Roma and Egyptian parents participate. 2.3.2 Number of parent boards where Roma and Egyptian parents participate.	Information from school directorates.	Regional Education Directorates/ Education Office, school directorates	Regional Education Directorates	2013 - 2015	2013 - 2015	No budget	
Area: Employment and social protection								
Objective: Sustainable improvement of the economic situation of Roma and Egyptian families by increasing opportunities for employment								
ACTIVITIES	INDICATORS	Source of data	Responsible Authority	Monitoring	Timeline	Funding		Source of funding
						Preliminary assessment		
Objective 1: Launch and implement special employment programs for Roma and Egyptian								
1.1 Employ the members of the two communities in the public sector (no less than 3%), including all levels starting from cleaning jobs and up.	1.1.1 Number of members from both communities employed in the public sector.	Municipality	Lezha Municipality, Labour Office.	Employment Office	2013	None	None	None
1.2 Organize information campaigns with unemployed Roma and Egyptians about opportunities and benefits from	1.2.1 Number of projects implemented at the local level. 1.2.2. Number of Roma and Egyptians involved in the campaigns.	Reports and information from the Labour	Lezha Employment Office	National Employment	2013- 2015	300.000	Lezha Employment Office Donors	



employment programs.										
1.3 Include Roma and Egyptians in employment promotion schemes for people in need, as subsidy schemes for salaries and tax facilities for employers.	1.2.3. Ratio between Roma and Egyptians and the total number of unemployed people involved in these campaigns. 1.3.1 Percentage of funds allocated to Roma and Egyptians compared with the total funds used for these schemes. 1.3.2 Percentage of Roma and Egyptian beneficiaries compared with the total number of beneficiaries from these programs.	Reports and information from the Regional Employment Offices.	National Employment Service	National Employment Service	2013- 2015	2013- 2015				In including this category as jobseekers, pursuant to the Decisions of the Council of Ministers (DCM) for Promoting Employment, costs are calculated according to DCM no. 48 on employment of jobseekers in economic difficulties for a period of 12 months. Such cost is estimated to be ALL126.084 per person.
1.4 Finance economic development and employment programs that enable Roma and Egyptians to overcome poverty.	1.4.1 Number of initiated programs. 1.4.2 Percentage of Roma and Egyptian beneficiaries compared with the total number of beneficiaries from these programs.	Reports and information from Lezha Employment Office, Information from Lezha Municipality	National Employment Service	National Employment Service	2013- 2015	2013- 2015	3.000.0000			State Budget Donors
Objective 2: Integrate Roma and Egyptian communities in the public general education and vocational training										
2.1 Open (mobile) vocational training and qualification programs in the city of Lezha for young Roma and Egyptians.	2.1.1 Number of special courses planned for young Roma and Egyptians in Lezha. 2.1.2 Number of unemployed Roma and Egyptians participating in vocational training courses. 2.1.3 Percentage of Roma and Egyptians employed after training.	Information from the Employment Office of Lezha	National Employment Service	Regional Centre of Vocational Training Shkodra	2013- 2015	2013- 2015	1.000.000			State Budget Donors



2.2 Provide vocational training courses for Roma and Egyptians in traditional crafts.	2.2.1 Number of new courses (handicrafts) opened by the labour office. 2.2.2 Number of young Roma and Egyptians who attended vocational training courses in crafts by age and gender.	Information from the Employment Office of Lezha.	National Employment Service	Regional Centre of Vocational Training in Shkodra.	2013- 2015	250.000	State Budget Donors
2.3 Provide support, services and information to Roma and Egyptian entrepreneurs about support structures, and offer training on business management (e.g. how to develop a business plan, accounting, legal procedures), and training on marketing.	2.3.1. Create support services for Roma and Egyptian communities. 2.3.2. Number of Roma and Egyptian entrepreneurs who benefited from training. 2.3.3. Number of training programs developed and implemented for Roma and Egyptians.	Information from Lezha Chamber of Commerce.	Lezha Chamber of Commerce, NGOs	Lezha Chamber of Commerce	2013- 2015	No budget	
2.4. Organize information campaigns about the rights and obligation of Roma and Egyptians regarding employment, about different assistance programs, and about the operation of the social insurance scheme.	2.4.1. Number of organized campaigns. 2.4.2. Number of Roma and Egyptians who participated in these campaigns. 2.4.3. Number of promotional spots and other materials used.	Information from the Employment Office and Regional Directorate of Social Insurance.	Directorate of Employment Policies, NGOs focused on Roma and Egyptians.	Employment Office, Regional Directorate of Social Insurance.	2013- 2015	300.000	Employment Office Donors
Objective 3: Increase and improve child protection services for Roma and Egyptian children							
3.1 Empower the Child Protection Unit in Lezha Municipality and establish cooperation with other structures to ensure timely intervention in the case of children in need for protecting them against every type of abuse, violence, and exploitation.	3.1.1 Cooperation between Child Protection Office and other structures for protecting children in the city of Lezha. 3.1.2 Number of training provided to the children protection units per year. 3.1.3 Amount of funds allocated to support for child protection units per year.	Information from the Regional Directorate of Social Service, Directorate of Social Service, Municipality of Lezha.	Municipality MSWY, Regional Office of Social Service, NGOs.	Municipality	2013- 2015	No budget	Municipality



3.2 Identify, and provide technical assistance and support to Roma and Egyptian associations focusing on protection of children in the city of Lezha.	3.2.1 Created database containing Roma and Egyptian NGOs working to protect children. 3.2.2 Number of supported NGOs. 3.2.3 Regular update of the database.	Information from the Regional Directorate of Social Service, Social Service Directorate, Municipality of Lezha, NGOs.	State Social Service, LGUs, NGOs, MSWY	Municipality	2013- 2015	No budget	Municipality
3.3 Establish a day centre for children in the city of Lezha, which will offer social services to abandoned and street children, including Roma and Egyptian children.	3.3.1. Day centre for street children established in the city of Lezha. 3.3.2. Number of Roma and Egyptian children benefiting services from this centre. 3.3.3. Amount of funds allocated to support the centre every year.	Information from the Regional Social Service Directorate.	Social Service Directorate, Municipality of Lezha, NGOs.	Regional Social Service Directorate	2013- 2015	85.000.000	Lezha Municipality Donors
3.4 Systematic monitoring of cases of exploitation of Roma and Egyptian children.	3.4.1. Number of processed and submitted reports. 3.4.2. Percentage of cases of monitoring of Roma and Egyptians compared with the total number of monitored cases.	Monitoring reports from the Labour Inspectorate	Labour Inspectorate	Directorate of Labour Inspectorate	2013- 2015	No budget	
Objective 4: Increase benefits for Roma and Egyptian communities from the social protection scheme by taking facilitation measures							
4.1 Organize public awareness with members of the Roma and Egyptian communities about their rights regarding the economic aid scheme.	4.1.1 Number of public awareness campaigns organized every year. 4.1.2 Number of information materials distributed in areas inhabited by Roma and Egyptians. 4.1.3 Number of Roma and Egyptians that have participated in	Information and data from the Social Service Directorate –	Social Service Directorate – Lezha Municipality NGOs	Regional Social Service Directorate,	2013- 2015	300.000	Social Service Directorate Municipality of Lezha



<p>4.2 Implementation of facilitation measures for including Roma and Egyptian families in the economic aid scheme.</p>	<p>these campaigns. 4.1.4 The amount of funds allocated to the development of these campaigns every year.</p>	<p>Lezha Municipality</p>	<p>focused on Roma and Egyptians</p>	<p>Lezha Municipality</p>	<p>2013- 2015</p>	<p>No budget</p>	
<p>4.2.1. Reports on the implementation of DCMs that provide facilitation measures for Roma and Egyptians regarding the criteria they have to meet for benefiting from the economic aid scheme.</p>	<p>Information from the Social Service and Economic Aid Directorate, Municipality of Lezha, monitoring reports.</p>	<p>Social Service and Economic Aid Directorate, Municipality of Lezha.</p>	<p>Regional Social Service Directorate of Lezha.</p>	<p>2013- 2015</p>	<p>No budget</p>		
<p>4.3 Execution of order addressed to Lezha Municipality for offering assistance to Roma and Egyptians in compiling the documentation needed for benefiting from the economic aid programs.</p>	<p>4.3.1. Monitoring reports. 4.3.2. Number of Roma and Egyptians who benefited Economic Aid.</p>	<p>Information from the Social Service and Economic Aid Directorate, Municipality of Lezha, monitoring reports</p>	<p>Social Service and Economic Aid Directorate, Municipality of Lezha.</p>	<p>Regional Social Service Directorate of Lezha.</p>	<p>2013- 2015</p>	<p>No budget</p>	
<p>Objective 5: Elimination of abusive cases of violation of the labour legislation</p>							
<p>5.1 Ensure conduct of continuous inspections by the Regional Directorate of Labour State Inspectorate in business activities and institutions which employ members of the Roma and Egyptian communities.</p>	<p>5.1.1. Number of conducted inspections. 5.1.2. Number of compiled and submitted reports. 5.1.3. Percentage of cases found among Roma and Egyptians compared with the total number of cases.</p>	<p>Inspection Reports from the Regional Labour State Inspectorate.</p>	<p>Labour State Inspectorate</p>	<p>Regional Directorate of Labour State Inspectorate</p>	<p>2013- 2015</p>	<p>No budget</p>	



Area: Housing and infrastructure							
Purpose: Ensure sustainable improvement of housing conditions for Roma and Egyptians							
ACTIVITIES	INDICATORS	Source of data	Responsible Authority	Monitoring	Timeline	Funding	
						Preliminary assessment	Source of funding
Objective 1: Ensure possibilities for housing and improve infrastructure in compliance with state standards in areas inhabited by Roma and Egyptians							
1.1 Update information about the needs for housing (construction, reconstruction, and renewal of basic infrastructure) in all units inhabited by Roma and Egyptian population in Lezha	1.1.1 Number of Roma and Egyptian families identified as homeless, including families that have verifiable incomes for meeting the criteria of social programs for accommodation, and those who do not have such incomes.	Housing Section in Lezha Municipality	Housing Section in Lezha Municipality, NGOs	Housing Section in Lezha Municipality, NGOs	2013 - 2015	No budget	
	1.1.2 Number of buildings constructed for Roma and Egyptian families in need in Lezha.	Housing Section in Lezha Municipality	Housing Section in Lezha Municipality NGOs	Lezha Municipality NGOs	2013-2015		State budget Donors
	1.1.3 Number of projects initiated by local government units inhabited by Roma and Egyptian population.						
	1.1.4 Amount of funds allocated to constructing and reconstructing homes for Roma and Egyptian families.						
1.2 Reconstruction of 42 buildings which require immediate intervention, and 29 other buildings that require non-immediate intervention. Location:	1.2.1. Number of reconstructed buildings for the Roma and Egyptian families in need in Lezha.	Housing Section in Lezha Municipality	Housing Section in Lezha Municipality NGOs	Lezha Municipality NGOs	2013-2015	33,600,000	State budget Donors
	1.2.2. Number of Roma and Egyptian families that benefit from						



<p>-“Skënderbeg” quarter of the city, building no.16 (8 families); -“Skënderbeg”, 5 apartments inside the quarter; -“Skënderbeg” quarter of the city, on the banks of Drini river (9 families). -“Besëlidhja” quarter of the city, behind the stadium (8 families), and behind “Gjergj Fishta” school (7 families); and 5 families in the quarter of “Gurra”.</p>	<p>the improvement of the living conditions. 1.2.3. Number of projects initiated by local government units inhabited by Roma and Egyptians. 1.2.4. Amount of funds allocated each year to the reconstruction of Roma and Egyptian homes.</p>	<p>Housing Section in Lezha Municipality</p>	<p>Lezha Municipality NGOs</p>	<p>2013</p>	<p>7,000,000 Lekë</p>	<p>State Budget for Lezha Donors</p>
<p>Activity 1.3 Intervene immediately for improving the drinking water and sewerage system in the following zones: - “Skënderbeg” quarter, Drini river bank, problems with the sewerage system (a length of 550m and width of 1.5 m); -“Skënderbeg” quarter, building no. 16, needs sewerage system (length of 150m and width of 1 m); -“Besëlidhja” quarter, behind “Gjergj Fishta” school, needs drinking water and sewerage system (a length of 1.5 km); -“Besëlidhja” quarter, in front of secondary school “Hydajet Lezha”, has numerous problems in the entire area where Roma and Egyptian communities live, including 1 km of sewerage pipes, asphalt, and water supply. The entire infrastructure requires intervention. - “Besëlidhja” quarter, behind the stadium, is a special case, where 10 families live in a barrack.</p>	<p>1.3.1 Number of projects for putting in operation the drinking water supply system for quarters of “Besëlidhja” and “Skënderbeg”. 1.3.2 Number of Roma and Egyptian families connected to the drinking water supply system. 1.3.3 Amount of funds allocated to the drinking water supply system in the quarters of “Besëlidhja” and “Skënderbeg”.</p>	<p>Housing Section in Lezha Municipality</p>	<p>The Municipality of Lezha</p>	<p>2013 - 2015</p>	<p>6,500,000 Lekë</p>	<p>State budget Donors</p>
<p>1.4 Intervene immediately for improving the road infrastructure (secondary road) and namely: -Quarter “Skënderbeg”, “Thertore” Street needs to asphalted (350 m long</p>	<p>1.4.1 Number of infrastructure projects for the secondary roads in the areas inhabited by Roma and Egyptian communities. 1.4.2 Number of Roma and</p>	<p>Housing Section in Lezha Municipality</p>	<p>The Municipality of Lezha</p>	<p>2013 - 2015</p>	<p>6,500,000 Lekë</p>	<p>State budget Donors</p>



<p>and 3.5 m wide); -The entrance to the quarter "Skënderbeg" needs only street lighting (a road 1.5 km long); -The quarter of "Besëlidhja", behind "Gjergj Fishta" Boulevard, needs 1.5 km of asphalted road, street lights, and green areas; -The quarter of "Besëlidhja", behind the stadium, also needs 1 km of asphalted road, green areas, and street lights.</p>	<p>Egyptian members/families that benefit from the improvement of the secondary road infrastructure. 1.4.3 Amount of funds allocated to the improvement of the infrastructure in the quarters of "Skënderbeg" and "Besëlidhja", which are inhabited by Roma and Egyptians.</p>	<p>Information from local Legalization Office (ALUIZNI in Albanian) in Lezha</p>	<p>ALUIZNI LGUs</p>	<p>2013 - 2015</p>	<p>No budget</p>	
<p>1.5 Consider the applications of Roma and Egyptians for legalization as a priority in implementing the applicable legislation. 1.6 Facilitate the legalization process by applying more relaxed criteria and by offering assistance to Roma and Egyptians in compiling the necessary documentation, considering the following problems: Out of 39 buildings in total, 10 have problems with land ownership, and the occupants have not applied for legalization; Some families live in a barrack in the quarter of "Besëlidhja", in front of the secondary school "Hydajet Lezha", and they do not meet the application criteria. The rest is scattered around the quarter of "Skënderbeg" and along the Drini river banks, and have problems with legalization, i.e. they are in the legalization process, and have not yet</p>	<p>1.5.1 Number of legalized Roma and Egyptian homes that meet the required technical and legal criteria. 1.5.2 Number of successful applications for legalization compared with the total number of Roma and Egyptian applications. 1.6.1 Number of privatized Roma and Egyptian families.</p>	<p>Information from the Housing Office, Lezha Municipality</p>	<p>Lezha Municipality</p>	<p>2013 - 2015</p>	<p>For buildings built in 1950 and have a size of 40 m², the fee is 600.000 lekë per building. For buildings built in 1969 with a size of 41 m², the fee is 612.000 lekë per building. For buildings</p>	<p>State budget Donors</p>



received the certificate due to their failure to pay a fee required by the law: in the quarter of "Gurra", 5 of the families have problems with the land ownership, they have applied, but have not yet received the certificate of ownership.										built in 1985 with a size of 85 m ² , the fee is 500.000 Lekë per building	
1.7 Approve and implement local programs of social housing for Roma and Egyptian families in need in the city of Lezha (rented social houses; low-cost houses, sale of land provided with infrastructure and permission for constructing homes).	1.7.1. Number of Roma and Egyptian families that benefitted from these social housing programs. 1.7.2. Number of Roma and Egyptian families that benefitted low-cost homes. 1.7.3. Number of Roma and Egyptian families that benefitted/bought land provided with infrastructure and with permission for building homes.	Information from LGUs, Roma and Egyptian NGOs.	LGUs	LGUs				2013 - 2015		State budget Donors	
<p>Priority area: Health</p> <p>Strategic objective: Ensure sustainable improvement of health and living conditions for Roma and Egyptian population in Lezha</p>											
ACTIVITIES	INDICATORS	Source of data	Responsible Authority	Monitoring	Timeframe	Funds					
						Preliminary assessment	Potential source				
Objective 1: Raise the awareness of the Roma and Egyptian population about health care and available health services											
1.1 Develop education and public awareness programs about reproductive health, maternity and infant care, women's health, etc. among the Roma and Egyptian communities in Lezha.	1.1.1 Number of special education programs developed for reproductive health for the Roma and Egyptian communities. 1.1.2 Number of Roma and Egyptian	Reports from the Regional Directorates of Public Health,	Regional Office of Public Health, Directorate of Public Health,	Institute of Public Health, Directorate of public health,	2013- 2015	300.000	State budget for education and public awareness programs Donors				



<p>1.2 Organize education and public awareness programs for protection from HIV, AIDS for the Roma and Egyptian communities in Lezha.</p>	<p>members who participated in the education programs for the reproductive health. 1.1.3 Amount of funds allocated to education programs for reproductive health organized for the Roma and Egyptian communities.</p>	<p>Health, NGOs</p>	<p>NGO .</p>	<p>NGOs</p>	<p>2013 - 2015</p>	<p>300.000</p>	<p>State budget for education and public awareness programs Donors</p>
<p>1.3 Organize information campaigns for Roma and Egyptian communities about the documentation and procedures for getting access to health services of all categories.</p>	<p>1.2.1 Number of special education programs developed for Roma and Egyptian communities for protection against HIV/AIDS. 1.2.2 Number of Roma and Egyptian participants in the education programs for protection against HIV/AIDS. 1.2.3 Amount of funds allocated every year to the implementation of educational programs for protection against HIV/AIDS. 1.3.1. Number of information campaigns for Roma and Egyptian communities about the documentation and procedures for getting access to health services of all categories. 1.3.2. Number of Roma and Egyptian participants in the informative campaigns. 1.3.3. Amount of funds allocated every year to the informative campaigns about the documentation and procedures for benefiting health services.</p>	<p>Reports from the Regional Directorates of Public Health, NGOs</p>	<p>Institute of Public Health, Directorate of Public Health, NGOs</p>	<p>Institute of Public Health, Directorate of Public Health, NGOs.</p>	<p>2013 - 2015</p>	<p>300.000</p>	<p>State budget for education and public awareness programs Donors</p>



Objective 2: Increase access of Roma and Egyptian communities to the public health system						
				2013 - 2015	300,000	State budget for education and public awareness programs Donors
2.1 Organize vaccination campaigns for Roma and Egyptian children who risk to not have taken all the vaccines.	2.1.1. Number of campaigns organized for vaccinating the street Roma and Egyptian children or children who risk not having taken the necessary dose of vaccines. Number of Roma and Egyptian children registered in the vaccination scheme during the public awareness campaigns. 2.1.2. Amount of funds allocated every year to the implementation of the vaccination vaccines for Roma and Egyptian children.	Reports from the Regional Directorates of Public Health, NGOs	Institute of Public Health	Institute of Public Health, Directorate of Public Health, NGOs.		
Objective 3: Improve the hygienic and sanitary conditions in Roma and Egyptian settlements						
3.1 Identify areas inhabited by Roma and Egyptians that present a risk to health; conduct hygienic, sanitary, and epidemiological inspections in these areas; and take measures to prevent epidemic.	3.1.1 Number of hygienic, sanitary, and epidemiological inspections conducted in the areas inhabited by the Roma and Egyptian communities. 3.1.2 Number of Roma and Egyptian families covered by inspections in each area. 3.1.3 Measures taken for preventing epidemics in the areas inhabited by Roma and Egyptians.	Reports from the Regional Directorates of Public Health, LGUs, and NGOs.	Institute of Public Health, Municipality	Institute of Public Health, Directorate of Public Health, NGOs	No budget	
3.2 Develop education and public awareness programs about the importance and ways of maintaining personal and settlement hygiene.	3.2.1 Number of education and public awareness programs for personal and settlement hygiene. 3.2.2 Number of Roma and Egyptian participants in the education and public awareness	Reports from the Regional Directorates of Public Health,	Institute of Public Health, Directorate of Public Health, NGOs	Institute of Public Health, Directorate of Public Health,	300,000	State budget for education and public awareness programs Donors



	programs for personal and settlement hygiene.	NGOs		NGOs	
	3.2.3 Amount of funds allocated every year to the development of education programs for the importance of personal and settlement hygiene.				

Priority area: Social inclusion and equal opportunities							
Strategic purpose: Ensure social inclusion and increase access of Roma and Egyptian communities to public institutions							
ACTIVITIES	INDICATORS	Source of data	Responsible Authority	Monitoring	Timeline	Funding	
						Preliminary assessment	Potential source
Objective 1: Raise public awareness for preventing cases of trafficking of Roma and Egyptian children and girls in particular							
1.1 Organize public awareness campaigns and activities of an informative nature about the risks and consequences of trafficking.	1.1.1. Number of Roma and Egyptian persons involved in these campaigns. 1.1.2. Number of organized campaigns. 1.1.3. Funds allocated to public awareness campaigns. 1.1.4. Number of circulation of publications. 1.1.5. Number of broadcast TV programs.	Reports of the Social Service Directorate Lezha Municipality, NGOs.	General Directorate of the State Police	General Directorate of the State Police	2013-2015	300.000	State budget for organizing public awareness campaigns Donors
1.2 Organize meetings of Roma and Egyptian communities with Police in order to increase cooperation and prevent	1.2.1. Number of meetings organized each year.	Information from the Regional	General Directorate of the State	General Directorate of the State	2013-2015	300.000	State budget for organizing public awareness campaigns



cases of trafficking.	1.2.2 Number of Roma and Egyptian organizations and persons that participated in these meetings.	Directorate of the State Police, NGOs.	Police	Police	Donors
Objective 2: Empower the Roma and Egyptian communities to protect rights and freedoms, in order to prevent and reduce cases of discrimination					
2.1 Develop informative/training programs for the leaders of the Roma and Egyptian communities, leaders of the public institutions and non-profitable organizations in order for them to properly follow and address the cases of discrimination.	2.1.1 Number of organized informative programs. 2.1.2. Number of provided training programs. 2.1.3 Number of Roma and Egyptian beneficiaries from these programs. 2.1.4 Total number of beneficiaries from these programs.	Information from Institute Public Administration, Human Rights NGOs, Roma and Egyptian NGOs	Institute of Training for Public Administration, Human Rights NGOs, Roma and Egyptian NGOs		
2.2 Identify, prevent, and solve conflicts that may cause violence in the community and in families.	2.2.1 Total number of conflicts. 2.2.2 Number of solved conflicts. 2.2.3 Percentage of Roma and Egyptian population involved in conflicts.	Information from the regional State Police directorates, NGOs.	Regional Directorate of State Police	General Directorate of State Police	None
2.3 Develop legal education programs for the members of the Roma and Egyptian communities in order to increase their knowledge of human rights as a preventive measure against breaches from public and private institutions.	2.3.1 Number of developed programs. 2.3.2 Number of initiated campaigns. 2.3.3 Number of publications on legal education. 2.3.4 Total number of beneficiaries.	Information from NGOs	NGOs, Office against Domestic Violence under Lezha Municipality	Municipality	Municipality Donors



	<p>2.3.5 Percentage of Roma and Egyptian beneficiaries compared with the total number of beneficiaries of these programs.</p>						
<p>Objective 3: Registration of Roma and Egyptian population in the national civil registry</p>							
<p>3.1 Identify and register Roma and Egyptians that are not registered in the national civil register.</p>	<p>3.1.1 Percentage of Roma and Egyptians without identity documents compared with the total number of Roma and Egyptians in the country.</p>	<p>Civil registry offices, Roma and Egyptian NGOs.</p>	<p>Civil registry offices, LGUs, NGOs</p>	<p>National Civil Registry Office</p>	<p>2013 - 2015</p>	<p>No budget</p>	
<p>3.2 Provide legal/administrative assistance to Roma and Egyptian families in need for civil registration, including registration of births, children's custody, transfer of residence, registration as homeless, registration as unemployed, and any other registration needed for benefiting public social services.</p>	<p>3.2.1 Number of cases that have benefited such assistance.</p>	<p>Civil registry offices.</p>	<p><u>National Chamber of Lawyers</u>, Civil Registry Directorate, Municipality</p>				



Priority area: CULTURAL HERITAGE							
Strategic purpose: Preserve and develop the cultural heritage of the Roma and Egyptian communities as an element integrated in the cultural heritage, and encourage young people to respect cultural diversity							
ACTIVITIES	INDICATORS	Source of information/ data	Responsible authority	Monitoring	Timeline	Funding	
						Preliminary assessment	Potential source
Objective 1: Create conditions for preserving and cultivating the cultural heritage of Roma and Egyptian communities.							
1.1 Create cultural artistic groups of the Roma and Egyptian communities.	1.1.1 The creation of cultural artistic groups of Roma and Egyptian communities.	Cultural Centre of Lezha, Municipality	Cultural Centre of Lezha, Municipality	Cultural Centre	2013	No budget available	
1.2 Include the cultural artistic groups of Roma and Egyptian communities in the cultural and artistic activities organized in the city of Lezha.	1.2.1. Number of cultural activities where cultural and artistic groups of Roma and Egyptian communities are involved. 1.2.2 Number of Roma and Egyptian participants in these activities. 1.2.3 Percentage of Roma and Egyptian participants compared with non-Roma and non-Egyptian participants.	Information about activities from the Municipality	Cultural Centre of Lezha Municipality	Cultural Centre of Lezha Municipality	2013 - 2015	No budget available	
1.3. Support cultural and artistic activities inspired by the Roma tradition and culture.	1.3.1. Number of organized cultural activities. 1.3.2. Number of Roma and Egyptian participants in these	Information about the activities from the Municipality	Cultural Centre of Lezha, Municipality	Cultural Centre of Lezha, Municipality	2013 - 2015	100.000 every year	Municipality Donors



	activities.			Roma and Egyptian NGOs				
Objective 2: Create an inclusive supportive environment that appreciates cultural diversity								
2.1 Organize entertaining and sport activities that aim at promoting inter-cultural understanding and mutual respect among Roma and Egyptian children and young people.	1.3.3. Percentage of Roma and Egyptian participants compared with non-Roma and non-Egyptian participants.							Municipality Donors
	2.1.1 Number of entertaining and sport activities that aim at promoting an enhanced inter-cultural understanding.	Information about the activities.	Municipality	Municipality	2013 - 2015	150.000 every year		
	2.1.2 Number of Roma and Egyptian participants compared to non-Roma and Egyptian participants.							
2.2 Support artistic Roma and Egyptian creators and include them in the competitions organized at the local level.	2.2.1 Number of supported Roma and Egyptian creators.	Municipality, Cultural Centre.	Municipality, Cultural Centre.	Municipality, Roma and Egyptian NGOs	2013 - 2015	Be budget available		
	2.2.2. Number of Roma and Egyptian creators involved in competitions for artistic creativity.							
	2.2.3 Number of contests organized for developing Roma and Egyptian creativity.							