

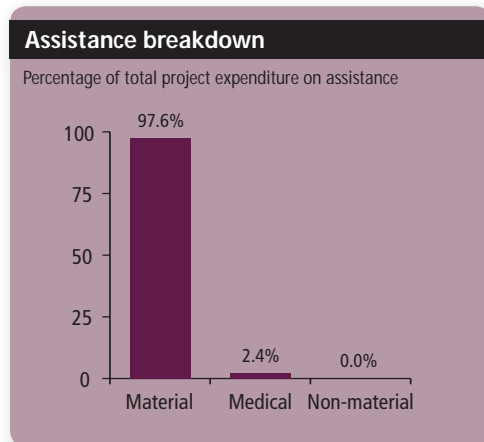
Roma Survivors



Belarus

In Belarus, IOM worked in cooperation with the Belarusian Gypsy Diaspora organization to distribute humanitarian assistance to 1,806 Roma victims of Nazi persecution. HSP began its first project in December 2002 and completed the second of two project extensions in June 2005.

Country snapshot	
Total beneficiaries	1,806
Men	36%
Women	64%
Service providers	1
Projects implemented*	1
Implementation period	Dec 2002-Jun 2005
Average project length*	31 months
*Initial project and extensions count as one.	



Outreach

When IOM first started disseminating information to potential service providers, outsiders knew little of Roma NGO activities in Belarus. Ukrainian Roma NGOs recommended the **Belarusian Gypsy Diaspora (BGD)** as a potential project partner.



The BGD expressed its interest in cooperating with IOM and demonstrated an understanding of programme requirements. IOM's discussions with the other Roma NGO registered in Belarus were less promising. Although it had limited management experience, the BGD had nationwide contacts with Roma communities and leaders. It organized an information meeting with government agencies, including representatives from the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, the State Committee for Religion and Ethnic Nationalities, and the Ministry of Education. The scope and nature of HSP assistance, as well as the general situation of the Roma in Belarus, were discussed.

Pre-programme estimates placed the number of HSP-eligible elderly Roma in Belarus at 721. The BGD said it expected the actual number of beneficiaries to be far greater. Since the NGO had limited information concerning persons of survivor age, and only a rudimentary implementation strategy, IOM initially approved a small-scale project, focusing on the city of Minsk and its surroundings.

Twenty-four Roma community leaders collected potential beneficiary information and assessed relevant needs. The data offered BGD a clearer picture of the situation in different areas, eventually allowing HSP to expand.

Beneficiaries

At the time HSP activities were launched, the national census reported approximately 9,000 Roma living in Belarus, though minority rights NGOs estimated the number to be closer to 60,000. Although dispersed throughout the country and often integrated into other populations, most Roma in Belarus are unemployed and live in extremely poor conditions. The BGD reported that only 10 per cent of elderly Roma in Belarus received a monthly pension, usually not exceeding US\$ 30.

Beneficiary identification required persistence and time. Belarusian Roma in urban areas live in apartments with some basic services. They are more likely to receive a pension than Roma in rural locations. Those in the countryside were found to be more desperate, dwelling in houses made of timber heated with coal, or firewood, and often without a chimney.

Survivors shared modest accommodations with their large families, often including unemployed sons and daughters. Beneficiaries asked IOM to help these as well. Although programme parameters made this impossible, survivors were free to share material assistance. This allowed the elderly to contribute to a household's daily subsistence. One beneficiary, bedridden and with nine unemployed children, said that nearby private companies would not hire Roma. Another told fortunes in the streets to supplement her meagre pension.

Asked about their memories of the war, beneficiaries recalled travelling to Russia or hiding in the forest with their family members. Many did not survive.

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Pressured by their communities, local representatives of the Belarusian Gypsy Diaspora failed to distinguish between elderly victims and others just as needy, and had to be reminded of the strict eligibility requirements.

products had to be “imported” to be of acceptable quality. In addition, many did not believe that HSP assistance would be free. Beneficiaries eventually expressed their deep gratitude, some even telling IOM that they would not have survived the winter without this help.

Projects

The Belarusian Gypsy Diaspora started with a small project for a limited number of beneficiaries. With the help from local community members it identified 144 needy Roma victims in and around Minsk. Project activities consisted of monthly deliveries of food and hygienic supplies.

By starting with a limited project, the BGD could better assess the needs of survivors while allowing IOM to monitor its performance. After the identification of more eligible Roma throughout Belarus, IOM approved the expansion into a number of areas with high concentrations of survivors.

This first extension brought assistance to 25 new locations in Minsk, Gomel, Mogilev, Grodno, Brest and Vitsyebsk regions. The service

Assistance breakdown and beneficiaries assisted		
Type of assistance	% of beneficiaries receiving assistance	% of total project expenditure on assistance
Material		
Food (except food packages)	0.0	0.0
Food packages	100.0	73.9
Clothing	80.3	9.1
Winter assistance	11.1	1.3
Emergency financial support	22.1	5.8
Hygienic supplies	100.0	7.5
Medical		
Medical and/or dental assistance	33.2	2.4
Non-material		
Homecare	0.0	0.0
Legal assistance	0.0	0.0
Social assistance	0.0	0.0

provider estimated that it could reach 1,450 eligible survivors. Beneficiaries received food packages and hygienic supplies. As BGD now covered a larger territory, it distributed aid every second month instead of monthly. The 400 most vulnerable cases were eligible for emergency financial support, usually to pay overdue utility bills.

The BGD relied on its local representatives to coordinate logistics. Difficulties arose when some of these, pressured by their communities, failed to distinguish between elderly victims and others just as needy. IOM reminded the service provider to apply strict eligibility requirements.

Other factors delayed project implementation. The Belarusian Department for Humanitarian Aid required that the service provider



share beneficiary data and blocked international transfers to its bank account pending the verification of the origin of incoming funds. The selection of most vulnerable former victims for emergency financial support was time-consuming. The scarcity of basic goods on the domestic market, notably bedding and medications, also slowed assistance delivery.

Throughout its project the BGD identified new beneficiaries. Many Roma survivors initially did not believe that assistance would in fact materialize and had been reluctant to register, but did so when their neighbours received assistance. IOM approved a second project extension to include 1,806 beneficiaries. While continuing to deliver food, hygienic supplies and firewood, medical assistance was also added. A project physician collected prescriptions and delivered medications.

Food packages, winter fuel and emergency financial support were the most popular types of HSP aid in Belarus.

Conclusion

IOM worked closely with its sole service provider in Belarus to assure adherence to HSP guidelines and to support the implementation of project activities. While continuously identifying and assessing beneficiary needs, IOM reached a significantly higher number of survivors in Belarus than initially anticipated. The service provider regularly adapted the assistance to match beneficiary needs and requests.

While IOM's first priority was to address the needs of Roma Holocaust survivors, HSP also had a positive impact on Roma civil society in Belarus. Neither could have been accomplished without the dedicated involvement of the Belarusian Gypsy Diaspora and its network of community-based Roma representatives. Mutual cooperation led to enhancing the capacity of Roma organizations, a functional association of service-oriented community representatives and a more thorough understanding of the needs of the Roma in Belarus.



Project overview

HSP project*	Beneficiaries	Assistance types	Start	End
Belarusian Gypsy Diaspora	144	Food packages, hygienic supplies	Dec 02	Sep 03
Belarusian Gypsy Diaspora (1st revision)	1,450	Food packages, clothing, emergency financial support, hygienic supplies	Sep 03	Jan 05
Belarusian Gypsy Diaspora (2nd revision)	1,806	Food packages, winter assistance, medical and dental assistance, hygienic supplies	Oct 04	Jun 05
Roma and Sinti, total**	1,806			

* Initial projects and project extensions are listed separately.

** Beneficiaries assisted under more than one project or extension are counted only once.

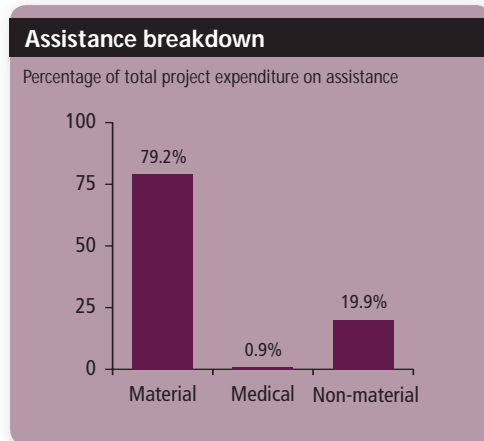
Note on project names: "Revision" denotes extension of an existing project.



Czech Republic

IOM Prague, with support from IOM Kosice (Slovakia), oversaw a total of seven HSP projects. Activities began in June 2002 and ended in November 2004. Two projects were terminated early. In total, 3,498 Roma survivors of Nazi persecution were assisted.

Country snapshot	
Total beneficiaries	3,498
Men	52%
Women	48%
Service providers	7
Projects implemented*	7
Implementation period	Jun 2002-Nov 2004
Average project length*	14 months
*Initial project and extensions count as one.	



Outreach

IOM contacted a number of organizations that had already implemented projects for Roma in the Czech Republic. Meetings with Roma and pro-Roma NGOs were organized. Throughout project implementation, IOM disseminated information on HSP activities and project requirements.

IOM Prague first contracted two service providers with different capacities, the People in Need Foundation (PINF), an organization with national scope and experience in social and legal assistance, and DROM Brno, an NGO active at the local level with extensive knowledge of Roma communities around the city of Brno. IOM later worked with five other partners. All HSP service providers relied on Roma field workers.

Beneficiaries

IOM estimates eligible Roma survivors in the Czech Republic at over 8,300. HSP assistance reached 3,498 beneficiaries, with emphasis on the poorer northern and eastern regions, areas slow to recover in the wake of post-communist reforms.

Elderly Roma typically do not face the life-threatening situations observed in some other countries. The Czech Republic has a stable



economy and a functioning social security system. The majority of survivors live in urban areas. Still, beneficiary insolvency often results in utility shut-offs and evictions. Many reside in poorly maintained homes in ghetto-like neighbourhoods and have limited access to state benefits. Many survivors were affected by flooding in August 2002, after which living conditions further deteriorated.

Few service providers were able to reach Roma survivors countrywide. The majority focused on local or regional coverage. HSP assistance in the Czech Republic was particularly diverse. Material assistance was often complemented with more sustainable social, legal and medical aid. Given the capacities of IOM's partners, needs assessments prompted HSP to discourage dependency on material aid and to emphasize sustainable forms of assistance. Food, winter assistance, clothing and hygienic supplies were delivered in accordance with individual needs.

The majority of Roma survivors in the Czech Republic live in urban areas. Many reside in poorly maintained homes in ghetto-like neighbourhoods and have limited access to state benefits.





The background and capacity of IOM's partners were important factors in the composition of assistance. Service providers drew on their experience, knowledge of beneficiary communities and ongoing fieldwork to both deliver sustainable assistance and to respond to urgent needs. Several service providers have continued to provide some forms of assistance to Roma survivors.

Projects

The **People in Need Foundation (PINF)** operated the first HSP project in the Czech Republic. PINF is an organization recognized for its expertise in social work. It had assisted Roma to file claims under other Holocaust compensation programmes. The service provider designed an HSP project that offered social assistance through fieldwork and counselling. PINF staff interacted with beneficiaries and their family members, provided information on entitlements, helped prepare forms and documents and intervened with state and local agencies. Despite its past experience, PINF overestimated its capacity to deliver aid and fell behind in project reporting. PINF has continued to work with survivors after HSP.

Roma-led **DROM Brno** chose an individualized approach for the delivery of multiple forms of assistance. Although beneficiaries were at first reluctant to have “strangers” in their homes, homecare soon became a preferred form of aid, particularly with beneficiaries living alone and having difficulty with daily chores. The service provider offered counselling on legal and family matters. The establishment of a social-legal advisory bureau and social club helped expand the scope and effectiveness of assistance. In order to create a lasting and inclusive impact, cultural events were open to younger Roma. Material aid included food, hygienic supplies, winter assistance and clothing. Beneficiaries were able to request assistance according to individual needs.

IOM approved a project extension, adding 72 beneficiaries to the original 303. Elderly Roma expressed their gratitude for the service provider’s response to individual needs. DROM established a solid organizational base and secured funds to reopen the social club after the HSP phase-out.

The **League for Help to Victims of World War II** sought to implement an ambitious national project for 1,250 survivors. This Roma organization delivered assistance to many beneficiaries living

Roma survivors in Olomouc were found to be as cut off from other Roma as they were isolated from majority community residents.

Assistance breakdown and beneficiaries assisted

Type of assistance	% of beneficiaries receiving assistance	% of total project expenditure on assistance
Material		
Food (except food packages)	28.8	15.3
Food packages	24.3	16.0
Clothing	31.5	13.4
Winter assistance	27.6	11.6
Emergency financial support	8.1	2.5
Hygienic supplies	49.1	20.4
Medical		
Medical and/or dental assistance	2.6	0.9
Non-material		
Homecare	10.1	3.5
Legal assistance	7.9	2.8
Social assistance	47.2	13.6

in remote locations. The most urgent needs were winter assistance, clothing and hygienic supplies. Implementation delays and departures from the agreed plan, together with the League's limited accounting capacity, compelled IOM to terminate this project early.

Romani Bacht proposed to assist isolated communities of Olassian Roma around Prerov. IOM stopped the project when the service provider proved unable to account for funds or to keep verifiable beneficiary lists. Olassian Roma survivors were later assisted through other HSP projects. In this instance, funds unspent were reallocated to further projects in country.

Eduko assisted the Roma survivor community in Olomouc, "a minority within a minority". IOM found this group to be as disconnected from other Roma as it was isolated from majority residents of Olomouc.



Some 302 elderly Roma were selected for assistance. They expressed a preference for material aid, food, hygienic supplies, clothing and winter fuel, complemented with social counselling, homecare and activities in social clubs funded by the project. Eduko faced particular challenges when several wholesale suppliers were reluctant to allow Roma beneficiaries, together with the service provider, to enter shops to select needed goods. An amenable supplier was eventually found. In social clubs, victims could meet other elderly persons, neighbours and younger Roma. According to the service provider, the social club represented one of the most important and effective project components. This helped to further the community reintegration of elderly persons and reduced neglect. However, Eduko has not been able to secure funding to continue the social clubs after the end of HSP activities.

The NGO **Regional Charity Most** assisted 261 Roma beneficiaries in Most, Chanov and Chomutov. Located in the north of the country, these poor regions have high concentrations of Roma. Beneficiaries assisted by the Regional Charity Most were among the most needy and isolated in the Czech Republic. As a non-Roma organization, it relied on fieldwork conducted by Roma staff and contacts in targeted communities. Following an extensive assessment of individual beneficiary needs, the service provider delivered a mix of material and non-material assistance. While food, winter assistance, clothing and hygienic packages met most urgent needs, regular social assistance and homecare improved their living conditions and helped elderly Roma and their families to gain information about other available services and entitlements.

ADRA, a professional humanitarian organization, delivered IOM's largest HSP project in the Czech Republic. The service provider was able to identify and assist 876 Roma survivors spread across eight districts. ADRA delivered standardized assistance to all beneficiaries. Content was defined during initial needs assessments and after consultations with local Roma NGOs, community representatives and local social agencies. ADRA enlisted the support of a wide array of partners to gain access to beneficiaries. Having previously administered humanitarian assistance in emergency situations, ADRA faced only limited challenges in serving a large territory.





Conclusion

IOM worked with both Roma and non-Roma NGOs in the Czech Republic. One challenge for many of its partners was the preparation of proposals and project plans in accordance with IOM requirements. Not all projects were successful.

HSP assistance in the Czech Republic was similar to that in other countries. Small-scale local projects delivered individualized aid. Larger projects, with regional and national coverage, provided standardized material assistance. Czech projects were unique in that they often focused on homecare, social and legal counselling, assistance considered appropriate by IOM and its partners for many Roma in this country.

Project overview

HSP project*	Beneficiaries	Assistance types	Start	End
People in Need Foundation	735	Social Assistance	Jun 02	Aug 04
DROM Brno	303	Food (except for food packages), clothing, winter assistance, homecare, emergency financial support, medical and dental assistance, social assistance, legal assistance	Jun 02	Jul 03
DROM Brno (1 st revision)	375	Food (except for food packages), clothing, winter assistance, homecare, emergency financial support, medical and dental assistance, social assistance, legal assistance, hygienic supplies	Jul 03	Sep 04
League for Help to Victims of World War II	949	Food (except for food packages), clothing, winter assistance, social assistance, legal assistance, hygienic supplies	Nov 02	Jun 04
Romani Bacht	n/a	Food (except for food packages), clothing, winter assistance, homecare, emergency financial support, medical and dental assistance, social assistance, legal assistance	Dec 02	May 03
Eduko	302	Food (except for food packages), clothing, winter assistance, homecare, emergency financial support, social assistance, hygienic supplies	Mar 04	Nov 04
Regional Charity Most	261	Food (except for food packages), clothing, winter assistance, homecare, emergency financial support, social assistance, legal assistance, hygienic supplies	Mar 04	Nov 04
ADRA	876	Food packages, hygienic supplies	May 04	Sep 04
Roma and Sinti, total**	3,498			

* Initial projects and project extensions are listed separately.

** Beneficiaries assisted under more than one project or extension are counted only once.

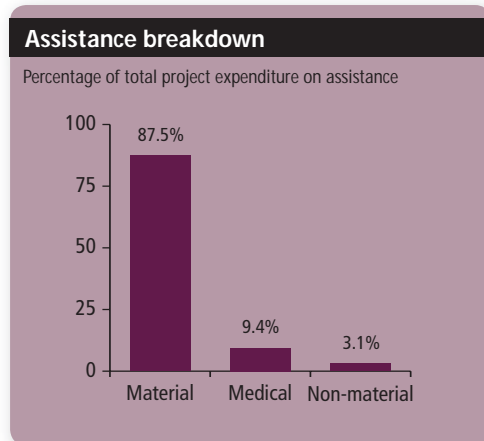
Note on project names: "Revision" denotes extension of an existing project.



Hungary

IOM Budapest assisted 15,220 Roma survivors of the Holocaust through five projects. Activities began in August 2002 and ended in February 2005.

Country snapshot	
Total beneficiaries	15,220
Men	44%
Women	56%
Service providers	4
Projects implemented*	5
Implementation period	Aug 2002-Feb 2005
Average project length*	20 months
*Initial project and extensions count as one.	



Outreach

IOM began by identifying NGOs that had worked with Roma. None had the infrastructure required to help large numbers of needy, elderly Holocaust survivors. IOM's calls for proposals to a wide array of organizations and government bodies met with little interest. None could provide reliable information on the size and needs of beneficiary groups.



Beneficiaries

Hungary has large numbers of Roma, both in absolute terms and as a share of its overall population. Pre-programme research predicted more than 20,000 Hungarian Roma eligible for assistance. The information served as a basis for project planning. It was especially useful in eastern Hungary where most Roma live in remote settlements.

Once IOM, together with partner NGOs, began to conduct its own assessment of potential beneficiaries, it discovered that some of those included in initial surveys did not satisfy the necessary criteria to qualify for aid, while others, though eligible, had been omitted.

Representatives of Hungary's community-based Roma Minority Self-Government helped facilitate the identification of eligible victims.



Roma in Hungary are considerably poorer than other groups and their health and social indicators are well below the national average. Research indicates that their life expectancy is significantly lower than for other groups.

Projects

The **Mediator Foundation** developed a project for the towns of Batonyterenye and Inancs in northeastern Hungary. This area is poorer than other parts of Hungary and has many Roma survivors. Both communities selected by Mediator had local organizations capable of implementing projects and accounting for activities. The service provider sought to fill gaps in the social and legal services available to elderly Roma. Assistance was designed to serve as a pilot for future projects in other Hungarian locations.

Needs assessments revealed that elderly Roma had little access to health care, pensions and general social services provided by the state. Beneficiaries expressed their appreciation for hot lunches, basic health services and homecare, legal assistance and counselling.

IOM found the need for material assistance to be roughly equal for all Roma in Hungary.



The service provider established a “seniors’ club” for Roma beneficiaries in each location. These soon became meeting points as well as a base for other services. Mediator organized recreational trips and special events through the clubs.

In Batonyterenye, club opening was delayed due to the need for renovations in the building provided by the town. Hot lunches were temporarily prepared at the local school and delivered to beneficiary homes. Higher renovation costs and the falling US dollar prolonged delays.

The NGO’s local partners affirmed that cooperation with Mediator and IOM enhanced their project development and management skills. Municipal authorities acknowledged the need to continue to assist the most vulnerable members of the Roma community. Both towns agreed to keep the clubs established under HSP open, using their own means.

Hungarian Baptist Aid (HBAid), a large, faith-based organization with international experience in emergency relief, implemented its first HSP project in Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén and Szabolcs-Szatmar-Bereg counties in northeastern Hungary.

HBAid used IOM's pre-programme survey of Roma survivors in designing its project plan. Its staff and volunteers worked with local representatives of Roma Minority Self-Government to identify additional beneficiaries and deliver assistance.

HBAid faced a variety of challenges. Victims were sceptical about the likelihood of actually receiving assistance, and were reluctant to share personal information. Soon after the project was launched, winter weather made many roads impassable. Working together with Roma community members, the NGO maintained contact with settlements and managed to deliver assistance. Fewer beneficiaries than anticipated were helped, owing to the death of some victims or their relocation to other areas. In some cases, presumed beneficiaries did not fully meet eligibility criteria and were removed from survey data.

Hungarian Baptist Aid delivered regular food and hygienic supply packages to 5,382 needy Roma. Even so, the project's major



Assistance breakdown and beneficiaries assisted

Type of assistance	% of beneficiaries receiving assistance	% of total project expenditure on assistance
Material		
Food (except food packages)	14.2	22.4
Food packages	90.0	12.1
Clothing	0.0	0.0
Winter assistance	13.8	0.6
Emergency financial support	0.0	0.0
Hygienic supplies	89.7	52.4
Medical		
Medical and/or dental assistance	14.8	9.4
Non-material		
Homecare	0.1	0.2
Legal assistance	14.8	0.2
Social assistance	14.8	2.7

achievement, according to beneficiary feedback, was its recognition of past suffering. Prior to HSP, survivors' precarious living conditions and continued persecution had been largely ignored by both social agencies and local communities.



When initial activities proved successful, HBAid expanded its project model to cover larger area. This included Bekes, Hajdu-Bihar, Csongrad, Jasz-Nagykun-Szolnok and Nograd counties. Budapest was excluded as potential beneficiaries there were found to be less in need of HSP assistance.

Roma concentrations in western Hungary are lower than in the eastern regions. For effective assistance to reach those regions therefore required higher per capita transportation costs. Although the standard of living in the western parts is generally higher, most Roma living there have significantly lower incomes than non-Roma. IOM found the need for material assistance to be roughly equal for all Roma in Hungary.

Under its second project, HBAid delivered assistance packages to 7,341 Roma. Amounts of food, hygienic articles and clothing were adjusted to changing beneficiary needs. Blankets were replaced with bed linens, and residents in one county received warm winter jackets.

The **Sex Education Foundation (SEF)** is a national professional NGO with experience in public health information campaigns and assistance to Roma. It has contacts with communities and expert Roma staff. SEF informed IOM that Roma in Hungary consult doctors less frequently than non-Roma, and they therefore designed a project concentrating on medical assistance. It worked with Roma minority self-governments, local health authorities and practitioners.

Assistance was geared towards the healthcare information needs of elderly Roma. Hypertension, cardiovascular problems, respiratory disease and cancer are prevalent among the Roma population, due in part to lower health awareness and limited access to state services.

The service provider encouraged elderly victims to value health and take simple measures intended to increase life expectancy and quality.

Through a series of health promotion meetings, SEF informed beneficiaries of common risk factors and lifestyle habits associated with certain diseases. It also discussed prevention strategies and recommended lifestyle changes. While SEF provided health counselling, Hungarian legislation did not permit direct medical intervention.

Health promotion club meetings took place in locations near beneficiaries' homes. These helped to foster a sense of community and created a platform for older Roma to exchange ideas. A SEF staff member was responsible for each of the 66 club locations.

SEF gave "food coupons" to beneficiaries at health club meetings as an incentive to attend and as the basis for discussions of nutrition. Coupons could be redeemed for food and other basic supplies at a national supermarket chain. Tobacco and alcohol were excluded.

SEF found more needy Roma survivors than expected; it assisted 200 persons from its own funds. Social and legal assistance were as popular as healthcare. The NGO advised elderly Roma of state entitlements and

Roma leaders criticized the ambitious, non-Roma-run HBAid project. They argued that material assistance was demeaning and inappropriate.





helped them to apply. Legal advice focused on access to social services, corresponding entitlements and discrimination issues.

A few Roma advocacy NGOs and specialized media criticized IOM's partner for collecting individual beneficiary information and accused SEF of violating privacy rights. IOM explained to the Hungarian authorities the safeguards it had put in place to protect sensitive personal data. IOM Budapest and Geneva also helped to clarify the apparent confusion between HSP assistance and various Holocaust compensation programmes.

The task of administering, delivering and reporting assistance in 66 locations led to delays. Still, despite administrative and accounting difficulties, the project was implemented in a professional manner. SEF

left behind a network of dedicated and experienced Roma community representatives with the potential to carry out future activities on behalf of their communities.

The **Roma Leaders' Professional Association of Bagamer** ran a small project in eastern Hungary. This NGO is the local chapter of a larger Roma organization active in social assistance. The small scale of the project made it possible to customize assistance and to respond to the special needs of each beneficiary. The service provider's intimate knowledge of the community, its survivors and their economic situation facilitated the preparation phase. Each beneficiary received food and winter heating fuel. The most vulnerable community members also received hot lunches and homecare.

Conclusion

IOM administered diverse forms of assistance and tested several project models in Hungary.

Prominent Roma leaders criticized the ambitious HBAid non-Roma-run project. They argued that material assistance, in particular instead of cash, was demeaning and inappropriate. Nonetheless, HBAid's beneficiaries expressed their gratitude to IOM and emphasized that it had provided essential sustenance. The small, comprehensive project in Bagamer provided tailor-made assistance and services to a remote and very poor Roma community. SEF organized a health promotion campaign that produced lasting improvements in beneficiaries' lives. Mediator's seniors' clubs played important roles in their communities and, thanks also to non-Roma neighbours, have outlived HSP.

In a country where Roma issues have high political visibility, HSP was often "in the spotlight". It faced more communications challenges in Hungary than elsewhere. IOM and its partners needed to emphasize on a number of occasions the differences between HSP and other Holocaust survivor assistance programmes. IOM also had to explain that receipt of HSP assistance did not prevent a beneficiary from receiving financial compensation under other programmes.



Project overview

HSP project*	Beneficiaries	Assistance types	Start	End
Mediator Foundation	200	Food (except for food packages), medical and dental assistance, social assistance, legal assistance	Aug 02	Sep 04
Hungarian Baptist Aid (1)	5,382	Food packages, hygienic supplies	Sep 02	Apr 04
Roma Leaders' Professional Association of Bagamer	44	Food (except for food packages), food packages, winter assistance, homecare	May 03	Jun 04
Hungarian Baptist Aid (2)	7,341	Food packages, winter assistance, hygienic supplies	May 03	Dec 04
Sex Education Foundation	2,253	Food (except for food packages), winter assistance, medical and dental assistance, social assistance, legal assistance	Apr 03	Feb 05
Roma and Sinti, total**	15,220			

* Initial projects and project extensions are listed separately.

** Beneficiaries assisted under more than one project or extension are counted only once.

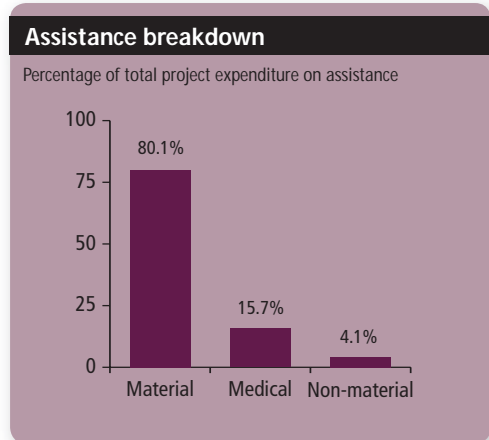
Note on project names: Number (only) in parentheses indicates a service provider with more than one project approved for funding.



Latvia and Lithuania

HSP project activities in Latvia and Lithuania began in April 2004 and ended in January 2005. IOM had first sought to identify external entities that could act as service providers in these countries. When these efforts proved unsuccessful, IOM offices in Riga and Vilnius worked together to deliver assistance directly. HSP helped 769 needy Roma survivors of Nazi persecution.

Country snapshot	
Total beneficiaries	769
Men	40%
Women	60%
Service providers	1
Projects implemented*	1
Implementation period	Apr 2004-Jan 2005
Average project length*	9 months
*Initial project and extensions count as one.	



A project lawyer worked with residents of the Taboras settlement who had received condemnation notices and were awaiting the demolition of their homes.

Outreach

IOM's search for an external service provider delayed the start-up of assistance. IOM Riga contacted two Roma NGOs that had expressed their interest in HSP. Despite support from IOM, in the end neither presented an acceptable proposal or plan. Both lacked the required references and knowledge of the number and location of Roma survivors. IOM determined that, to make HSP assistance available in Latvia and Lithuania, it would need to carry out activities directly. IOM ensured access to Roma communities by hiring a Roma project manager as well as other staff with links to these communities.

Pre-programme research served as the starting point for the identification of survivors. Further fieldwork led to the identification of additional beneficiaries in both Latvia and Lithuania and allowed IOM to better gauge the needs of the survivor population.

Beneficiaries

While Latvia and Lithuania's accession to the EU has been preceded by more than a decade of economic and political reform, most elderly Roma there had benefited little from the changes. Many impoverished,

illiterate survivors have only meagre pensions with which to support grandchildren whose parents have left to seek work in Western Europe. The only additional source of income for such families may come from picking forest berries and mushrooms and selling them in local markets.

IOM estimates the Roma population in the Baltic States to be relatively small, approximately 11,000 persons. Many live in Roma-only settlements. Some of the worst living conditions are found in Taboras, a Roma neighborhood on the outskirts of Vilnius, Lithuania. Elsewhere in Lithuania and Latvia Roma live in the poorest districts, in segregated settlements or alongside other groups.

IOM's initial assessment revealed a great need for material assistance among Roma survivors. Five cubic meters of firewood were delivered to all beneficiaries. HSP paid the long-overdue utility bills for some living in apartments. Each beneficiary in Latvia could select basic clothing items from specially contracted shops. As this service was unavailable in Lithuania, it was made up for with additional firewood. Each beneficiary received two food and hygienic packages. Seventy-eight of



the most vulnerable received emergency financial support to cover rent or utility debts. Beneficiaries living in Taboras got building materials to repair their houses.

Medical assistance consisted of general and specialist examinations and dental care. Elderly Roma who were able to visit a doctor still lacked the means to purchase medications.

Project staff regularly visited beneficiaries. Survivors had an opportunity to attend a Christmas gathering and enjoy the company of other community members, friends and neighbours whom some had not seen for decades. Roma social workers selected and provided 51 needy survivors with homecare. This included cleaning, shopping and fetching water from wells.

Legal assistance dealt primarily with the reissuing of lost personal documents, the facilitation of access to state benefits and liaison with state and local offices. A project lawyer worked with residents of the Taboras settlement who had received condemnation notices and were awaiting the demolition of their homes. Some were entitled to legalize their residences based on long occupancy. Others obtained a suspension of the eviction orders. The issue of Roma housing in Taboras continues to pose a problem to both residents and city authorities seeking a permanent solution.

Projects

IOM Riga initially expected to assist 600 survivors. Roma living in and around Riga had been excluded on the assumption they lived in better conditions. This assumption soon proved to be incorrect and 100 more beneficiaries were included. The number increased further when, on seeing HSP in action, 69 more survivors came forward. IOM assisted a total of 694 Roma in Latvia and 75 in Lithuania.

IOM cooperated with 21 local Roma coordinators who helped in the delivery of assistance. These were leaders of small NGOs or informal representatives of Roma communities. While HSP relied on both





groups, the latter were found to be more in touch with survivors and therefore more effective.

As in other locations, IOM's offer of assistance at first met with distrust. A number of survivors had been misled, apparently by Roma leaders, into believing that acceptance of HSP assistance would disqualify them from receiving financial compensation based on previous claims. Once it became clear that this was not true, they contacted IOM with the request to be included in HSP.

HSP assistance improved living conditions temporarily for needy survivors and their families. It also helped IOM to understand the specific needs of elderly Roma, a group largely neglected in the Baltics. While many Roma had been disappointed in the past by promises of assistance, most expressed surprise and appreciation for HSP support. They expressed their gratitude that their suffering had been remembered and affirmed that assistance came at a time when their living conditions were desperate.

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Assistance breakdown and beneficiaries assisted		
Type of assistance	% of beneficiaries receiving assistance	% of total project expenditure on assistance
Material		
Food (except food packages)	0.0	0.0
Food packages	100.0	17.3
Clothing	88.4	19.9
Winter assistance	78.0	27.4
Emergency financial support	10.1	5.2
Hygienic supplies	100.0	10.4
Medical		
Medical and/or dental assistance	83.9	15.7
Non-material		
Homecare	6.6	2.6
Legal assistance	6.5	0.5
Social assistance	6.5	1.0

By collaborating with IOM, local representatives were able to serve their communities, improve their capacity to represent constituents and develop project skills.

Conclusion

Survivors in Latvia and Lithuania most appreciated HSP support in the form of firewood and food aid. Medical assistance was also vital, as only few survivors could afford the rising cost of healthcare and lacked access to state benefits.

IOM and its partners worked together to address individual needs, even though limited time and resources permitted HSP to meet only a few of these.

IOM Riga continues working with its Roma contacts in the field to develop new projects. The experience and knowledge gained under HSP has also positioned IOM Riga to contribute to Latvia’s National Roma Strategy.

Project overview

HSP project	Beneficiaries	Assistance types	Start	End
IOM Riga	769	Food packages, clothing, winter assistance, homecare, emergency financial support, medical and dental assistance, social assistance, legal assistance, hygienic supplies	Apr 04	Jan 05
Roma and Sinti, total	769			

