

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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CHAPTER 1

The contribution of the community to the organizational process in terms of working out different problems.

1. Community of Korca

Proces of organization and mobilization of Korça community

The community of Korca is in its first steps of establishing an organized structure within the community. The people have begun to participate in meetings and discuss their problems. Two groups have been set up in the community, the local board and the group of the mothers of those children to attend the kindergarten. The local board has enforced the impact within the community and gained its trust. Two leaders have been distinguished in this community. One is a member of the local board, characterized by good negotiation skills with local authorities and other NGO-s and the other one is a representative of women.

There are also facts that the community of Korca has capacity to develop itself, and this is concretely showed in these examples: **construction of the kindergarten, professional courses and the mothers which are going to attend the activities in the kindergarten.**

The leaders support each other and by being transparent, they have enjoyed the support of the community. Community people have begun to establish links with each other. These links were established as a result of common problems and efforts to solve the problems. The community has become more organized to address its rights to local authorities.

Development phase:

The members of the community, before the interventions of Amaro Drom, were skeptical. It was very hard to get the community organized. People totally lacked the desire to work on a volunteer basis or in groups. They were unaware of their own potentials and capacities. There were no relations established with local authorities. The community had not launched any initiatives to solve its problems. Amaro Drom has taken appropriate actions in the community of Korca to increase the capacity of the local board and sustained two activities on the organization and mobilization of the community. These actions by Amaro Drom Union have enabled the community members to get organized and involved. The community has established relations with local authorities, which previously lacked.

2. Community of Baltëz

Development of Baltëza Community.

The community of Baltez has increased its organizational capacity. The community members have established links with each other. The information on the implemented activities is disseminated throughout the community. Announcement posters are available at the community center, (which is situated within the community), with regard to new things happening.

The local board or everyone else that has a problem or a tackling situation to share with others may make announcements. People become more interactive and cooperative by organizing various activities for the improvement of the situation of the community. Through various meetings, people in community have started not only to express their own opinions on related problems, but also to be actively involved in solving them. A social structure is established within the community, by which the information is disseminated in the community.

This structure includes the local board (five members), the group of women (ten women) as well as the school operating as a community center, attended by the community members, based on the activities they organize. To date, two leaders have been distinguished in the community of Baltez.

One of them is a member of the local board and the other one represents the group of women. The leader that represents the group of women is supported by women and enjoys their trust, due to her support to them. They both have good negotiation, management and organizational skills.

Different examples give a clear picture about the capacity development of the community. The community members got self-organized to clean the facility and they offered also financial assistance to pay the person that would collect the garbage to each house.

The community has also developed its capacities in negotiating with local authorities. (for example, local authorities have been involved in the projects of the community, they have financially supported the road paving project and paid the engineering expert, who prepared the estimates for the rehabilitation of houses).

This is a clear indicator that the community is capable to solve its problems.

How did the community solve the problems within the community?

One of the problems faced by the board in Balteza was the discrimination of the roma children at school. The teachers made them sit at the rear end of the classroom. Mothers together with two members of the board, negotiated with the school director, seeking an equal treatment of their children. The other day, the kids said that the teachers had changed their seats.

Another problem was the lack of a summer camp for children. The local board has negotiated with the organization Flidia, in terms of providing support to a summer school, with the aim of entertaining children during their summer vacation. These fifteen days, the children had the opportunity to get entertained by means of various games, excursions and they also learned new things.

3. Community of Morava

Development of Morava Community

At the beginning it was too hard to involve the community in the activity. They thought that the others would think of them and they would do nothing at all. However, on a step by step and a project-by-project basis, the community together with the board managed to become aware of their own capacities to solve their own problems.

That is visible in the following aspects: the organization of various groups of women, children and young people in local activities; initiative to perform activities out of the program of Amaro Drom; Successful negotiation with local authorities; the activities of various groups were guided by the leaders elected in groups; efforts to establish links with various organizations and institutions.

The members of the board have progressively developed appropriate skills and knowledge to properly negotiate with local authorities. They also learned how to divide tasks and responsibilities, how to build confidence and trust of their community, how to explore their problems and take decisions to the right solutions of the problems.

The community members have become confident on their capacity of self-organization, of decision-making with regard to the improvement of their living situation. They have now a clear view on the importance of both elements of prosperity of their community: the voluntary work together with material contribution and assistance.

On the other side, the members of the youth and women groups already involved in self-organization activities have increased their confidence in their own capacities and skills with

respect to common decision making, taking over of individual responsibilities, right and fair approach of fund management and increase of incomes.

An example of successful negotiation of the board members with the local authorities is clearly identified in the implementation of the two last projects: canalization projects, where the commune has contributed with 20 % of the total fund, and the building of community center, where the commune has granted the lot and the expert of the project estimate, free of charge to the community.

In addition to the projects supported by Amaro Drom, the Local Board has launched other initiatives to solve the problems of the community, such as: a problem identified by the community members was the paving of the road leading to the cemeteries of the village. The community members upon their initiative paved the road leading to the cemeteries, which is 150 ml long.

Another problem was the involvement of children excluded from the socio- cultural activities, such as orphaned children. To this end, upon its own initiative, the board made these children attend the community center, organizing them in recreation summer camps and at the end gave them a modest present.

4. Community of Kuçova

Mobilization and organization of Kuçova Community

At the beginning phase of the activity, the community members did not know how to lobby to the local authorities and were not capable to acquire financial assistance (lek), but when realizing that this fact represented a serious and worrying problem to their community, they decided to get together, (the board members and the community members), with the aim of developing discussions with each other and take collective decisions to tackle the current problem in their community.

Due to the adequate experience obtained from the implementation of previous projects, they discussed the problem and negotiated in an appropriate way with local government representatives. The successful negotiations with local authorities were clearly expressed in the way the group was organized for the meeting in the commune (a group of three representatives from the community and three members of the board was set up), the way how that group negotiated with the representatives of the local government bodies (they prepared in advance a negotiation strategy, presenting the problems and its consequences – the strong desire of the community to change the current situation – the successful implementation of the previous activity organized by the community members, with the support of Amaro Drom, Spolu and the municipality of Kuçova).

The increase of the capacity of the board is also visible in the extension of cooperation not only with the area that is under the subordination of the municipality of Kuçova, but also with the commune of Perondi, which has the other suburban are under its direct subordination.

5. Community of Durrës

Development of Durresi Community

The social structures have been newly consolidated in this community and they have started to interact with each other. Presently, the local board is operational, consisted of seven members and the sports groups has fifteen members. Although the establishment of social structures has just been materialized, it is noted they have a positive exchange of information with each other. The members of the local board have divided their tasks, selecting and prioritizing them, according to the respective capacities and experience.

The problem of the sewerage system was solved through the negotiation with local authorities and the successful involvement and assistance of “Amaro- Drom”. Regarding the discussion of the problem of social assistance, the negotiations with local authorities are still underway, with the main focus on working out this problem, as some families belonging to this community are unfairly denied the assistance; accordingly, the members of the board are working on drafting a list that they will present to local authorities.

People have become aware of their own potentials and capacities and the strength they acquire when they get together, representing a powerful voice. A local board is operational, elected by the community, representing their interests, with the aim of requesting the respect of their own rights. The community is better organized, being involved in the decision making process.

People have become more attached to each other and they have started to get organized in independent groups, such as the youth sports group. The leaders have consolidated their reputation and they enjoy the support of the community members. Yet, there is still more to do in that the people must not seek the solution of their problems in the community only through the implementation of projects.

6. Community of Grabian

Development of Grabiani Community

In this community, social structures have been just consolidated and started to interact with each other. The local board presently consists of seven members and the sports group has fifteen members. Three leaders are distinguished in this community, where one of them is a youth representative, elected by the young people themselves. At least two of the members of the board have become good negotiators, managing to build other alliances. Yet, there is still much more to learn. The members of the local board have negotiated with local authorities, requesting them to offer equipment and machineries for the road paving project. They have also concluded negotiations with some other local organizations, such as Cafod and a religious organization, with good operational and motivational qualities.

The community of Grabian asked for the solution of their problems. One of the problems that concerned the people of this community was the phenomenon of illiteracy. In this context, the local board is supported by a local organization (Cafod) which has enabled the implementation of a project, including people from different age- groups, who learn to write and read. Another problem represented two families of this community, which lacked shelter. To facilitate this problem, the local board cooperated with a religious organization, which offered financial assistance to these families to build their houses.

7. Community of Levan

Development of Levani Community

There is a complexity of organizational structures in this community, such as: the local board, (7 members), sport team (15 young members), women group (21 persons).

Worth mentioning that all structures generally make their decisions in a democratic way by engagement of as many as possible community members. Leaders have understood the need to be supported by the community. This need is directly linked with their reputation and respect by both the community and the local authorities. In this frame, they will be more able to solve the real problems of their community. The basis is closely linked with the opinion building with the

common conclusion on their problem solutions. For instance, a working group was set up on the occasion of the flooding case of 40 families, with the aim of talking with the local community. The working group was a very good combination of all structures of the community, such as the local board, sport group, and women group.

The local board has accepted an understanding aspect on the existence of other independent groups; that understanding is built through confidence and hard work together. Other groups are often made part of the constructive debates through participation of members of other communities. They have both realized that together their voice could be stronger to the solution of their problems and their rights.

Participation in various training sessions hosted by different NGO-s with the members of the community is another indicator supporting capacity building. These trainings sessions are very important to the union and the consolidation of the community spirit. For example, the training session related to business issues of the 35 members of the community by the OSCE was very attractive and fruitful to the members of the community.

The members of the community of Levani faced different problems and they managed to find their solution:

The issue of the paving of the road segment linking the Roma neighborhood with the cemetery; in negotiation with local authorities and Amaro Drom with regard to the financial support.

Another serious problem of the community was the participation of children in school and the reduction of illiteracy of the community members. Discussions were made with the director of the school in this regard and the decision was to establish a working group with the main task to register all the children in the school. Another emergent problem asking for an urgent answer and solution was the problem of the flooding of 40 families from the waters of the big canal of this community. Floods came as a result of intense raining and the negligence to clean the canal. The board had an immediate response to the situation management through contacts with local authorities.

8. Community of Savër

The first common efforts of the members of Roma community of Savra to change their current situation, led to the successful implementation of a mini-project in the infrastructure area: Road paving, Canalizations and Potable water supply system.

The Roma community of Savra got self-organized to improve its living conditions. The members of this community became aware of common potentials and the relations with local authorities have been considerably enforced. This means that it is established the confidence in common potentials and the members of this community will continue to ask more by themselves.

This activity gave a chance to the community members to discuss with each other and decide together for the solution of the problem. On the other hand, that was the first step towards the awareness of Roma community of its own capacities and potentials.

Initially, the local board had meetings with local government bodies, to establish cooperation relations. The draft-agreement stipulating the liabilities of the community, local board, municipality and Amaro Drom was prepared by Amaro Drom Center, where as the members of the community board assumed to conclude negotiations with local authorities, as they could meet the respective obligations in terms of the project.

The negotiation of the members of the board proved to be successful, because, upon their own initiative, they knocked on the door of the municipality office of Lushnje and managed to earn the trust and cooperation of the representations of this institution.

All community members were aware that the project was to their own benefit and in favor of a big number of families, not merely to specific individuals.

The area residents didn't see it as a service or a gift offered to them, but rather as a challenge, by which they would manifest their skills to a successful performance

9. Community of Novosela

Development of Novosela Community

There are various groups in the community having formed a social organized structure. The four various groupings of the community are the local board, the group on the economic initiative, the youth group, women group dealing the geese breeding activity. We can mention also a leader of the youngsters, another for the women and another one from the local board. These leaders are now well known by the community and they have the support of their community because they represent their best interests and qualities.

Members of the community have developed individual capacities to think and develop opinions on various important issues. They have started to think about the solution of the problems of their community and their important role in this process. Members of the community have developed negotiating skills with local authorities.

Different problems were solved by the members of the community, one of them was that concerning the lack of drinking water in their community. Many Roma families have been for three days without water in their houses. The reason was that some families of the neighborhood had not paid their taxes to the respective institutions. Being in the same water supply network, the authorities cut the supply for all families with no consideration for those who had paid their obligations. This situation led to tensions in the community. For the solution of the problem, the local board was engaged claiming to the commune authorities with the argument that it was not right for the families respecting the law to suffer the same consequences with those breaking them. With this argument in hand, the problem was solved. On the other side the members of the community exercised pressures on those families, which had not paid the water supply obligations. Although, at the beginning, they were making excuse that they did not have enough money to pay the obligations, they have now started to pay all water obligations to the state authorities.

Another problem solved by Nevosela Community was the utilization of water pumps for getting the drinking water to the irrigation purpose of their arable lands. The water of the drinking fountain had not enough pressure and their agricultural products were in danger to the draught. They asked for assistance of some other organizations and found a good support by the organization Word Vision.

Amaro Drom has taken a number of initiatives in the community of Novosela. The community showed that has possibilities and good capabilities to solve problems. The leading board is respected and trusted in the community.

CHAPTER 2

Community Development Activities

1. Korça: Professional courses for 20 young Roma women

Brief description of the activity (what was supported):

The activity of professional courses took place in the community of Korça. Twenty young women were involved in this activity. Ten girls chose to join sewing courses, where as the other ten took up hairdressing courses. All of the women involved in those courses were housewives and professionally incompetent to join the employment market. The young women have expressed the desire to attend the courses as to have an opportunity to acquire professional skills and face the labor market. The course lasts six months and the young women have been attending it for four months to date. At the end of the course, all of them will be awarded a certificate recognized by the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs.

The impact of the activity on the mobilization of the community

This activity made the young women more active and better organized. It was the first time for them to assume the responsibility of organizing an activity independently. (**example**, before the beginning of the activity, the young women went to the local board and expressed their desire to join courses, but they thought that the board would be responsible for every step taken. The board agreed to help them but did not accept to assume the tasks that were to be performed by the young women. Hence, the young women, though initially did not trust in their own skills, had three meetings, where they decided what courses to join in and what presented most interest to them. Each girl chose the course she wanted and at the same time they prepared a list with the names of everyone and the type of the course. They asked about the places where the courses were to take place and have decided where to enroll.) This activity has enabled those young women to acquire professional skills, to face the labor market.

2. Baltëz: Rehabilitation of houses

Activity: Rehabilitation of houses

The project of the rehabilitation of houses is implemented in the community of Baltez. Twenty houses have been rehabilitated. The families that benefited from this project were selected in accordance with a set of criteria (the poorest families, the families that had a disabled member, families having elderly people, families living out of the minimum standards of living.

The establishment of criteria had a positive impact to prevent the generation of conflicts among the community members. The families that benefited from the project paid the expert and an amount of 5 thousand old Lek, which was used for the organization of a cultural activity for women. (a visit to the museum).Local authorities also contributed to the rehabilitation project. They provided the expert that made the rehabilitation estimates.

What was the impact of the project on the mobilization of the community?

The implementation of the project on the rehabilitation of houses helped twenty families to improve the current situation of their miserable houses. It also motivated people to get involved.

The activities taken place in the community of Baltez are also associated with regular community meetings (**for example**, after the establishment of criteria, the members decided to set up a commission to identify the situation of the houses of the families that were selected, respecting the

relevant criteria. The commission consisted of seven persons (three were from the local board and four were community representatives.)

What are some of the lessons learned from this community?

Through the activities taken place in the community of Baltez, people have learned to taken decisions collectively. The community members have started to realize that they can solve the problems in their community by themselves. However, people still need to assume the responsibility of further developing these skills and break the mentality that they cannot solve any problems, without the intervention of external factors. People have learned to distinguish the duties of the local government bodies.

3. Grabian, Durrës, Nevosel and Morava

Young roma organize themselves in sport activities.

Activities related to the support of football teams were organized in the Roma communities of Novosel, Morava, Durres and Grabian. This activity made possible that 15 young members of each community were completed with necessary technical means to be able to participate in sport activities. The sport team was provided support for this (such as sport costumes, sport shoes, balls, gloves, gym equipment). The young members themselves did manage the fund provided for this activity.

Youngsters asked for support of the local board for the sport suits while they made efforts to find themselves the funds needed for the travel support of the matches out of the area. Young members asked for support of the local board.

Support of the football team has encouraged the youngsters and it has made possible they can get together and consolidate a good football team. The team is trained three times a week, but the young team members meet each other even during the other days of the week. The team after some training sessions has been organized and finalized with football matches with other teams.

The youngsters adopted a very active and independent approach in implementing various tasks. The support to the sports activity not only made the youngsters more active, but is also encouraged them to find other ways of extending this activity in the future.

4. **Kuçova:** Sewerage system and Professional courses for the Roma young people of Kuçova and Morava.

First activity: Sewerage system

The sewerage project was implemented in the community of Kuçova. Prior to the implementation of canalization system, the community of Kuçova had a very hard time during rainy weather. That was a very critical issue, as various epidemics or diseases could be spread, particularly among children, as when they went out and played, they were in close contacts with the sewerage system.

The project lasted four months (September–December 2004). The length of the canal is 550 ml. This activity gave a chance to the community members and the local board to get together and discuss with each other and at the same time take collective decisions.

In this way, they have felt responsible for a problem of the community and have explored potential options of working it out.

They have also been involved in the canalization works and have employed an active approach toward the progress of works.

Local authorities have also been involved in the canalization project, providing technical assistance (equipment and machineries) and offering an expert to supervise the works. Furthermore, the community did not get assistance only from local authorities. They had negotiations with the commune, in order that the latter one enabled the lighting of a road in the area of Perondi, where Roma people live.

Second activity: Self organization of young roma in professional courses

Description of the activity

The professional courses activity took place in the communities of Morava and Kuçova. The young people addressed the issue to the boards of the communities of Kuçova and Morava by setting forth a request to join a professional training course, with the aim of having employment opportunities in the future. At the same time, the two boards presented the draft- project to Amaro Drom, in order to include a total of 20 young people from both communities.

The project consisted in providing these young people with relevant professional skills and the objective of the support of this activity was not merely the professional training of Roma youngsters (both young men and young women) with a potential employment opportunity in the future, but also the establishment of their self- organization, the enforcement of the contacts of the sub-group, the strengthening of links between the two communities of Morava and Kuçova, the stimulation of these young people to get self- organized and to help other peers in their community.

The project lasted three months (October– December 2004) and the amount of money given by Spolu is used for the disbursement of trainers and travel expenses.

The concept of community development is materialized not only by the fact that people are not interested simply to implement other projects, but also due to their understanding that they should solve their problems by themselves, thus assuming respective responsibilities and initiatives for changing the current situation.

5. Saver: Road Pave

That was the first experience for this community and will remain the first common effort of this community to change their current situation.

Activity: Road paving, Canalizations and Construction of water supply system

Aim of the project: Development of Roma community, Saver, Lushnje

Objectives:

- Self- organization of Roma community;
- Improvement of living conditions of the community;
- Sensibilization of Roma community in terms of their capacities and potentials;
- Improvement of relations of Roma community with Local Authorities.

The implementation of the project constituted a need for this community. 65 ml of road were paved with pebbles and stabilizing elements. 65 ml of canalizations were constructed with concrete blocks and tubes. The water supply system was implemented by the same way and a common fountain source was installed in the center of the village.

The idea for road paving, canalizations and the construction of water supply system came from the community, since they were tangible concerns for the circulation, health and living conditions of the area residents.

A considerable part of the residents of this community were involved in the implementation of the project. They carried out volunteer work under the guide of the local board and performed different tasks in the course of the project implementation.

Local Authorities were involved in the project as well, offering their assistance, in accordance with the draft- agreement signed between the Local Board – Municipality of Lushnje - Amaro Drom:

- Preparation of estimates by the technician of the municipality;
- Confirming the line where the canal and water tubes were extended.

The Local Board has played an essential role for the implementation of the project. The board started its work by meeting with the community, in order to identify the most emergent problems and the respective needs of the community.

During those meetings it was elicited the idea for the implementation of the project (road paving, canalizations and the construction of water supply system) which would meet a need of the community. After that, the members of the board delivered various meetings with the municipality representatives of Lushnje, concerning the draft of the estimate of works by an expert of this institution.

The volunteer work of the members of the community was a necessary component for the implementation of the project. To this end, the board did a very good job for the sensibilization of the community, to the common benefit of the project, as well as to the importance of the implementation of the project by the Roma community itself.

During the phase of the implementation of the project, the community and the board were involved through volunteer hand labor. In order to provide a successful implementation of the project and the organization of the community, the board made a work schedule clearly indicating all the steps to be taken, timelines and the importance of the successful implementation of the project.

During the implementation of the project, the community members offered not only volunteer hand work, but also financial assistance, paying mechanical equipment for digging a tough part of the canal. The community members are satisfied with the project implementation and have expressed their readiness to get engaged even in other common activities.

After the successful implementation of the project, the board organized a ceremony for the inauguration of works, with the participation of community members, local authorities, Amaro Drom, other organizations operating in the town of Lushnja, members of the social majority and local TV networks.

6. Levan: Road Paving

The infrastructure project of road paving was implemented in the Roma community of Levan. The road paved in this community was 1000 ml long and it passes through the quarter of the community, leading to the cemetery. This fact explains clearly the strong support to the community and the top priority given to this project.

It is already visible what has been improved, particularly during winter, as before, the road covered by mud made the circulation of people and particularly the vehicles very difficult.

This project had a positive impact on the mobilization of the community members. Initially, they were determined to set as a priority for the first half of the year the project in question.

To this end, they were strongly supported by the local board to lobby to the local authorities and Amaro-Drom (which had decided not to support this community with infrastructure facilities).

Hence, a series of meetings with local authorities were delivered, aiming to negotiate how they would contribute to this project. Open meetings were organized for negotiations, where, in addition to the members of the board, there were people from the community, who, I suppose, have played a

decisive role in the successful negotiations they concluded (support to 40% of the total sum of the budget).

What are the lessons learned?

People have started to realize that not all the things are possible for them, but with hard efforts, they can achieve what they want. They have learned and have started to realize that not every problem requires a project or a donor. In many cases, the solution is available within the community; they should only follow the right way. Women have learned to get organized and seek potential solutions to their problems.

7. Grabian: Road Paving

Brief description of the activity.

It is a well known fact that all Roma communities obviously lack infrastructure facilities, thus turning into one of the vital problems for the community members. As a result, in many cases we are their only point of reference, in spite of our insistence to address them to local authorities. 300 ml of road have been paved in terms of this project, where a fund was raised for the purchase of pebbles and stabilizing elements. The commune has offered machineries and equipment. The road is divided into two parts. Both of them are 150 ml for both Roma living areas. A discouraging factor during the implementation of this project was the frequent rainy weather.

This activity mobilized the community.

Given this visible fact, (infrastructure activity), people have become more attracted and involved, contributing to these projects, certainly by hand labor, hence offering voluntary assistance. The working process has been divided into two phases. During the first phase, the road in the center of the village was paved and during the following phase, it was paved the road in the new quarter. Worth mentioning is that the community members have helped each other, hence:

The members of the community that leave in the center of the village are helped by the members of the community, which live in the new quarter and vice versa. The local board has also played an essential role in this regard.

CHAPTER 3:

Income Generating Activities

Different income generating activities are supported in Levan (pig breeding), Morava (duck rise) and Novosel (sheep breeding).

1 - Levan: Chicken rising

There are 21 women engaged in this activity. They have bought small chickens to raise them. Chickens are bought with money borrowed by the women with a total 21 Euro each.

The initial idea of this project was the engagement of 15 women, after they got together, they decided to involve 6 more women in order to minimize the loan effect they would borrow. From the meetings they had in the community center, they elected 3 of the women to lead their activity.

One of the women was tasked to keep the account and the two others had the responsibility to organize women in various meetings and discussions on how to get better organized for the further extension of their activity. The women have started to feel closer to each other.

I confirm this in the decision they have taken to give back the loan. Some of the women lost a big number of chickens, because of the flood. Once the situation became normal again, the women got together and decided to postpone the deadline for giving back the loan, which they had set at the beginning. They did this, in order to help those women affected by the flood.

Another reason is that the women are responsible for the provision of food and veterinarian services, meaning a bigger responsibility and attention by the members of the group, in terms of this project.

I think that women have started to gradually understand that they can make substantial changes for their community.

2 - Novosel: Geese rising and Sheep breeding

Short description of the activity

The activity of Geese Breeding is a self-organizing activity giving the opportunity to some 11 women of the community of Nevosele to get together in an organization activity. Women have borrowed a certain amount of money for buying the geese. They have formed a group and have elected a responsible leader of the organizational aspect of the activity.

Women involved in the activity of geese breeding were all unemployed before this activity. Thus, the activity of geese breeding gave them an opportunity to be actively engaged. They have also formed a group meeting and talking twice a month in the community center. They discuss not only aspects of the activity but also their common daily problems (**for example**, in addition the meetings they organize twice a month, they have also gathered twice more having a coffee together and discussing on their own concerns). Women have independently taken their responsibility; they have established the rules of the group and are very dedicated to respect them.

This activity had a great impact on the women organization and their common actions. (**for example**, one of the women involved in this activity killed one of the geese. This situation created a conflict within the group, because the common rules decided with a common decision were broken. The other women organized a meeting and discussed on the actions to be taken on this case. They decided that all women to go to the house of the woman who killed the goose.

They decided that the woman should either replace the killed goose or she should pay the money back and get out of the group. This decisive action of the group had a great impact to the solution of the conflict. The woman who killed the goose was obliged to buy another goose, respecting the rules of the group).

The meetings the women have organized have encouraged their devotion not only to the increase the level of the activity of geese breeding, but also to development of new ideas in the future. (for example, on the occasion of the celebration of the 8 of March, the Women's Day, they would like to organize a party, and half of the total cost would be covered by the women themselves and the other half would be asked for sponsorship. Worth mentioning that it's the first time the women have the desire to get together and celebrate the Women's Day).

This activity has influenced on a better organization of the women, and a good willing for cooperation and support to each other problems.

Sheep breeding:

15 families of community of Novosele are involved in the economic initiative "Sheep breeding". Every family has taken three sheep, one of them pregnant and another one with a lamb. The idea to be involved in this project was initiated by the community members themselves with the purpose of

increase of their individual family incomes. All the head of the families were given the amount of money on the condition to pay that back in one and a half year time.

This period of time was decided by the families involved in the project. Each of the families has signed a contract agreement for the obligation of money within the period of time. The project has involved especially the families of low economic level, with good experience in sheep breeding, and appropriate infrastructure to the implementation of the project.

This activity had a good impact on the motivation of the community for the increase of their individual family incomes through their active engagement. They have also increased their capacity skills. Community members are learning and getting more information on intensification of their activity. The members involved in the project have organized several meetings with focus on discussions of enlargement of their activity in harmony with their available possibilities.

This way has produced a stimulus to make new progressive steps forward. They have already started to think not only for the present time, but even for the future perspectives of their families.

CHAPTER 4

Prepared by: **Diella Vuka, Journalist**

Character

Portrait of a community leader, Bukurie Dule, an example to be followed

Upon her own initiative, Bukurie Dule managed to take to school 35 illiterate Roma children. Bukurie is a 55 year- old woman and is the newest member of the board of Levan. Her own children are already grown up and she is not very busy with her family responsibilities.

In addition to her daily chores as a mother and a grandmother housewife, Bukurie has found a very fruitful way to spend her free time. She has become a member of the board of Levan for about one year.

She tackles a number of community issues and problems within the community, such as those covering children, women or youngsters. From the very outset, she managed to understand and identify the problems that represent the greatest concern for her community and she has attempted to find potential ways and alternatives to contribute and change the current situation of the community. In this context, she launched the initiative to contribute to the education of children.

Together with the secretary of the Board of Levan, she took the initiative and courage to go door to door and meet parents and children that had not gone to school. She talked with the parents of the children and persuaded them that it is very important for their children to go to school.

“If they don’t go to school and get educated, the future will be much harder for them than it is today, - says Bukurie Dule -Therefore, upon my own initiative and with a strong desire I managed to take to school about 35 Roma children”.

That is the way how Bukurie explains things and she is convinced to have done a great job in this regard. The persuasive efforts she has made with parents and the modest assistance in clothing and school items for children has made possible for about 35 children to go to school of Levan for the very first time.

Some of them joined the first grade of elementary school for the first time, where as some others had quit school and now they were back to school.

Some of them were illiterate and due to the insistence and encouragement of Bukurie, they were motivated to go back to school, to catch up with the progress of their peers, in spite of the obvious regress.

Yet, children are not the only concern for Bukurie. She is also involved in the women training events that have been conducted in the community.

The women of the community of Levan have been gotten together several times and have performed training sessions with regard to family, social and health topics and daily problems and barriers they face. The community is satisfied from the job of Bukurie. Even the parents think that it is better for children to spend their time at school than in streets. The local board and “Amaro Drom” Center are also quite satisfied from her job. She is playing an active role in the Board of Levan.

Registration of children at school

Efforts made by “Amaro Drom” for the registration of children for the academic year 2004-2005

The top priority of the Albanian Roma Union “Amaro Drom” for the period September- October has been the registration of children at school. Education is an important component of the strategy of the Albanian Government on Roma community issues.

Cooperation has been established with the regional Educational Directorates and other NGOs- with regard to the registration of children at school for the academic year 2004- 2005.

Work and efforts targeted to the young generation is considered by the Roma Union “Amaro Drom” as priority, in order to worthily involve them in the future social challenges. “Amaro Drom” made huge efforts to register at school as many children as possible through the assistance of the regional local boards.

To this effect, the local board members had contacts with their families and tried to identify potential ways of getting them back to school.

The situation of the registration of children at school in communities

The situation of the registration of children at school in the community of Baltez is as follows:

Twenty children have been registered at the first grade of elementary school. Sixteen children have been registered at the second grade of elementary school. Six children have been registered at the third grade of elementary school.

Sixteen children have been registered at the fourth grade of elementary school. Five children have been registered at the fifth grade of secondary school. Three children have been registered at the sixth grade of secondary school.

Four children have been registered at the seventh grade of secondary school and none of Roma children have been registered at the eighth grade of the secondary school. In addition, almost none of the Roma children have been registered at the high school.

According to the information collected by the Union as a result of the cooperation with the local board of Fier, about 30 Roma children ranging from 10 to 16 years old have quit school. In this context, the local board of Baltez is doing all possible efforts to talk with children, as they might be able to further attend school.

According to the information of the board, they quit school, as their families could not afford the cost of the education of their children.

They don't have enough money to buy books, school bags and other necessary school items. "We intend to find a teacher that might teach a mixed class of pupils of different ages to have several lessons once to twice a week, in order to teach these Roma children how to read and write"- says Latif Kazanxhi, the head of the local board of Baltëz

Novosela- Eight children have been registered at the first grade of elementary school. Including the older children, there are about ten illiterate children. Six children attend school.

Clothing, stationery, such as pencils, notebooks and toys have been offered to the children that go to school. Their families should be also offered financial assistance in order to enable the school attendance of their children. Roma families live under conditions of an extreme poverty.

Grabian- Twenty five children have been registered in the first grade of elementary school, out of which half have gone to school and the remainder has not.

Supplementary lesson of Albanian language should be taught for the first grade school kids in Grabian. Besides four obligatory classes, CAFOD is offering assistance in conducting the supplementary lessons.

According to Ajet Fetahu, if the supplementary lessons are not conducted, particularly for Albanian language, the Roma children may fall behind the other peers. Even at the first grade, they do not have the level of knowledge of other non- Roma children.

A Christian church has offered them clothes.

Levan- The registry office has not given birth certificates to the first grade children, because their families have not paid the land taxes.

The local board has met the chief of the commune, forwarding an official paper to the registry office, to enable the registration of children.

The transport of children in morning and their return back home is made possible. The local board has had several meetings with the representatives of the prefecture and educational directorate offices.

Other issues to be effected that concerned the community included the children's school attendance and the decrease in number of the illiterate children in the community. For this purpose, negotiations were made with the school director, resulting in the establishment of a working group that would be responsible for registering children at school.

Also, the Committee of Parents was set up and its chairman is Refit Dule, who is also the chief of the local board. The school director informs Refit about each kid that is absent at school and Refit further explores the issue.

Moravë – Berat- Fifty two children from the first grade to the fourth grade have been registered at school. That is a low figure in comparison to the previous years, because many families have gone to Greece.

During summer UNICEF organized summer camps, where among other things; knowledge acquired at school has been updated.

Korça- Five 10 to 11 year old children are illiterate. During summer, children have attended summer schools so as to be accepted in the first grade. Ten 7 year old children have been registered in the first grade at "Naim Frashëri" and "Ismail Qemali" school.

Seventy children from the first to the eighth grade attend school.

Many children remained unregistered because the registry office did not give them birth certificates, as their families have not paid taxes.

Saver- Saver has set a good example of efforts for the registration of children at school.

The local board of "Amaro Drom", in cooperation with CAFOD, has conducted courses against illiteracy, where 12 illiterate persons from 14 to 40 years old have been registered.

In spite of different age groups, they managed to group them in respective classes to teach them how to read and write.

Roma people are violently thrown out of their barracks

Roma community of Lana

25 families, in the middle of the street, in cold January

Roma people have become subject of a flagrant racism in the capital of Albania, Tirana. The construction police went to their barracks in the midnight of 6 January and got them out through the exercise of violence. That occurred in the presence of the construction police, the order police, the owner of the site Mrs. Miranda Boci and the team “Shqiponja”. The authorities of the construction police state that they have simply enforced law. In the dark, shivering with cold, the families tried to resist and not leave their houses, but everything was in vain.

The forklifts pulled the barracks and destroyed them. Roma mothers, holding babies in their arms, have been thrown out in the cold wintry weather. The view is painful; crying children, mothers cursing and men have expressed deep anger to the police. That night, a 26 year old Roma young man, Dritan Hashimi, is dead.

The other people sent him to the Military Hospital, hoping he would survive, but when he arrived there, he sighed his last breath. His family members carried his body over the ruins of their houses, to pay him the last tributes. The morning of 7 January found these families homeless, in the middle of the street, offended, humiliated and a young man is dead and brought to the cemetery.

Protest note of the Union

The Union of Albanian Roma “Amaro Drom” denounces the Lana event as a flagrant violation of human fundamental rights of the Roma minority in Albania. These residents had not minimum income to start the construction of their houses by themselves.

Attempts to get those residents out of their own barracks have started since 2002. The Union “Amaro Drom” has asked from the Municipality of Tirana the best solution possible for those families, which have no shelter to sleep, except their own barracks alongside Lana river shore.

“Amaro Drom” Union is protesting against the indifference shown towards the Roma community in Albania. This situation has precipitated as a result of the lack of attention by the Albanian government with regard to the living conditions of the Roma minority in Albania.

CHAPTER 5

1 - Training of the members of the Steering Board of Roma Community of Saver, Lushnje

«We, the members of the Steering Board of the Roma Community of Saver are confident that our work is both easy and difficult. We will commit ourselves with full devotion and determination to the development of the Roma community of Savre, under the principle “Everyone at work for a shared purpose”»

Objective: Increase of leading capacity of the Steering Board of the Roma Community of Saver, with regard to the implementation of the “Community development” approach.

Issues treated: -- Teamwork;
-- Identification of objectives;

- Participation strategy;
- Volunteer work

The training was conducted before the work for the implementation of the projects had started, in order that the Local Board could create a clearer vision of the best way of the project implementation; identify the importance of the activation of the community and the importance of the engagement and development of positive relations with the Local Authorities.

During the discussion, the participants appreciated the transparency in decision-making and declaration of available financial funds as a very important element for confidence building measures in the community having an effect on the engagement of the community itself in various activities. Participants had a clear vision and belief on the importance of self-initiative, self-organization, decision-making, transparency, communication, voluntary works issues, correctness and honesty, all- inclusive methods of participation, sustainability, self-evaluation, common goals and confidence building in the community.

The training was a necessary element concerning the consolidation of a solid board, linked also with the creation of a common clear vision of its members for their work in the future. A clear indicator for that was the following agreement they have reached with each other:

«We, the members of the Steering Board of the Roma Community of Saver are confident that our work is both easy and difficult. We will commit ourselves with full devotion and determination to the development of the Roma community of Saver, under the principle “Everyone at work, for a shared purpose”»

Training of the steering boards of Levan, Morava and Novosela community:

Issues treated:

- How to make a draft project
- Fund raising
- Leadership

The training aimed to promote the professional level of local organizations and to improve their work in the communities. The training program had a visible impact on the way the local organizations work in the community. The knowledge acquired by the training with regard to making a draft project, will help local organizations to know how to employ various sources and options for solving problems within the community. In this way, the organizations create different partnerships, with the aim of supporting initiatives in the community to solve various problems. Extended knowledge on fund raising helped the participants to learn and identify the alternatives for fund raising in the community, as well as to clarify the issue of the organization of activities with tight funds. Hence, the organizations set forth new ideas in terms of the sources of fund granting (in addition to foundations) by mobilizing local sources. Special importance in the training that would also influence the work of local organizations in the community was attached to the issue of leadership. Through various discussions, the characteristics of a good leader were identified. Local organizations play an essential role in organizing and motivating the community to be involved. The discussion on the leadership underscored the importance of the support of the community of the leader and the support and cooperation of community leaders with each other.

Through this training, local organizations learned new concepts, which will serve them to successfully work in the community. Hence, the participants were provided with information on issues such as:

How to make a draft project (the core elements needed for drafting a project, setting goals and objectives, describing a problem, structuring the budget)

How can we raise funds and where will we address to collect these funds (local authorities, sponsors, donations, businesses, self-financing, various locations where the organizations may request funds for the support of various problems within the community).

What should we take into consideration when we seek support to the funds (the accurate description of the problems, plan on the activities and the potential change that it may bring to the community?)

Local organizations learned about the importance of having a better view of the mission and the nature of institutions or organizations, where they will ask for funds, in order to enjoy their further support. A basic element underline in the training that the local organizations had to consider, was the support of the activities in the community, which involve and motivate the community to become aware of its own capacities and potentials to change the current situation in the community and not to stick to the idea that problems can always be solved through external actors. Local organizations obtained information on the following leadership issues: Characteristics of a successful leader; Types of leaders (authoritative, democratic, and charismatic); Duties and responsibilities of a leader; what distinguishes a successful leader.

2 - Training of the young Roma Leaders.

GOAL: Provide Roma youngsters with the vision of Young Leaders, with appropriate Information and knowledge in order to make them able to successfully face their own community issues.

Topics:

- Working in a Team
- Introduction to the Network Concept
- Community Development
- Work in Community
- Leadership skills

Why was it necessary to start doing something for the young roma generation?

The current situation of Roma minority in Albania is deplorable; the indexes of the level of poverty, illiteracy, unemployment and trafficking are appalling.

Even though they established a peaceful attitude while settling in Albania more than 600 years ago, they still lack a spirit of normal coexistence with their co-natives. This is due to the indifferent approach concerning their situation, prejudices and discrimination towards Roma people. They feel discriminated. This discrimination is not direct, but it has led to the self-isolation of Roma people.

Roma youngsters constitute the most marginalized group in our country. Raised under very difficult socioeconomic conditions and the striking pressure of the society, it was very hard for them to integrate into the social and cultural life of the country. Most of them are unemployed. Very rarely will one see Roma employed in State Institutions.

If we do not do something today, tomorrow will continue to be gloomy. Now it is the right moment to do something and help those who will represent a young generation in the coming years.

Tomorrow will be too late.

The learning process during the training was carried out through an interactive learning approach, theoretical information, practical exercises, case study, exchange of experience, work in groups (teams), discussions, reference materials, questionnaires, real role plays etc.

Participants learned the Function and the importance of the work in team, the definition and the meaning of community and basic principles of the method of Community Development, the qualities and stiles of a good leader, the way of organization of the community for solving their own problems. They have taken initial knowledge on the need for cooperation and the Network.

Participants discussed and made aware of the positive aspects of the diversity of cultures.

Open and transparent atmosphere, various games and role plays created a comfortable environment for free expression of opinions, discussions on exchange of experience.

This training was followed by another activity for the Albanian Roma Youth, **A Round Table on the integration and improvement of the situation of this group in Albania**, financed by the Foundation of the Open Society for Albania, Soros.

Five representatives from Roma NGO-s participated in the round table (Amaro Drom from Tirana, Romano Drom Organization from Fush Krujë, Alba Rom Organization from Durrës, The Organization « Roma woman of the future from Tirana, Romano Kham Organization from Tirana); Youth representatives of the local Roma communities (Korçë, Tiranë, Durrës, Fier, Vlorë and Kucovë); representatives of the Council of Europe in Albania, the State Committee for Minorities , the Albanian Committee of Helsinki, the Organization “Woman in the development focus”, The Organization « In support of children’s rights » as well as representatives of steering boards of several local communities.

Needs and priorities of the Albanian Roma Youth

All spheres of social, cultural and political activity highlight that the future is in the hands of young generation. However, Roma youngsters require a special attention with the view of improving their current situation, in order to have in the future the place they deserve in the Albanian society.

Some of the needs and priorities of this group are as follows:

- Enhancement of the capacity of the representatives (future Roma youth leaders);
- Update of educational and cultural level within the community;
- A higher school attendance level;
- Potential vacancies for Roma youngsters at professional schools and Albanian Universities;
- Drafting and implementation of professional training events by different institutions;
- Involvement of Roma youth in the National Youth Strategy;
- Creation of appropriate conditions for the promotion of activities of the Roma Youth Organizations;
- Identification of alternatives for the employment of Roma young people, participation in debates and discussions;
- Intensification of sports activities for this community;
- Access to public media, capacity development and increase in number of Roma journalists;
- Awareness raising activities with the aim of changing the current mentality of the community;
- Drafting of programs on exchange of experience and visits that might further strengthen the Roma youth, develop their sense of confidence in their own potentials and capacities, as to

gather sufficient experience in order to ensure an active participation as citizens in school, social activities, associations etc.

- Establishment of a national network of Roma youngsters;
- Enhancement of options for a broader participation in activities and national and international network of Roma youngsters;
- Extension of opportunities and instruments of disseminating information with regard to the potential involvement of youngsters in the socio- economic life of Albania.
- An effective work coordination of the national youth structures or the youth with regard to the implementation of the commitments specified in the National Strategy “On the improvement of the living conditions of the Roma minority in Albania” and the Youth Strategy;
- Awareness raising campaigns on the reduction of discrimination and prejudices within the Albanian society;
- Various publications for Roma youth issues;
- Strengthening of cooperation between Roma and non- Roma NGO-s, institutions and internal and external bodies on the improvement of the situation;
- Strengthening of national and international cooperation on the promotion of the conditions that favor the development of youngsters through drafting or implementing current youth policies and making the accomplishments operational, in order to prepare the ground for the promotion of the participation of the youngsters at local, national and international level;
- Implementation of activities and programs on social, cultural and economic development of this group;
- Involvement of Roma NGO representatives in different activities, in order to restrict youth differences;
- Program drafting and implementation (by Local Government) on training and development of Roma youngsters in local communities;
- Support to the small business and small enterprises for Roma youngsters;
- Supplementation of the legislation on the stimulation of the involvement of Roma youngsters in private business enterprises and companies;
- Stimulation of income- generating activities for this group;
- Programs on rights, freedoms and obligations;
- Programs on the prevention of the phenomenon of trafficking of human beings;
- Programs on the enhancement of the evaluation of the role of woman and her relevant problems etc.

The Albanian youth, as integral part of the Albanian youth and of the Albanian society as a whole, needs special attention concerning the improvement of its present conditions.

Such a change can be made possible only through common efforts of the Roma community and of the entire relevant Albanian structures.

3 – **Visit of Exchange of Experience**

The visit aimed at exchange of experience and information.

During the visit, the participants discussed and analyzed various aspects of the work of the community of Kucova. Strong and weak points were explored, in order to draw relevant lessons and avoid the potential mistakes in other communities.

The first issue discussed was the process of the development of the community of Kucova, with regard to which, the participants appreciated the way how the board negotiated with local authorities and different activities organized in cooperation by the organizations of Kucova (pertaining to culture, activities for children, women and young people). Many participants (particularly the representatives of the boards of Korca and Durres) were impressed from these achievements.

Another issue discussed was “Did the projects implemented so far, manage to develop a sense of belonging within the community? If YES, in what aspects? If NO, why?” After an analysis of different projects and their implementation approach, it was drawn the conclusion that the members of the Roma community of Kucova are aware that the positive things and changes in their community do not come as gifts, but the entire community has to be committed to obtain them.

On the other hand, the construction of a common community center and the sewerage system canalizations, not only are implemented by the work of the community, but they remain the property of the community. This is visible in the fact that the community takes care of their further maintenance. At the end of the discussion of this point, the participants agreed that in the future, they would attach special attention to the sensibilization of their community regarding the sustainability and maintenance of previous projects.

Concerning the third issue “The participation of the local board and relevant task division” the participants exchanged different opinions and the conclusion was drawn that the task division, the decision making and responsibility assuming processes at all of the local boards are made in an open and democratic way.

“Cooperation of local organizations with other actors. The importance of this cooperation”, the participants discussed about different positive and negative experiences with local authorities, public institutions and other nongovernmental organizations. A lot of opinions were forwarded on the improvement of the process of negotiation with third parties and the increase of confidence of leaders in terms of their negotiation skills and the protection of the interests of Roma community.

The coming issue „The progress of the participating local organizations, how much do they feel they represent the voice of the community?” elicited different ideas pertaining to the representation of the community at local and national level.

Various initiatives for cooperation with other organizations constitute a clear indicator of the enhancement of skills and responsibilities of the representation of their community.

The participants agreed on the importance of the self-organizing activities and their stimulation and the strong impact they have on the improvement of the economic conditions of the community, their sensibilization of the common coordination, taking responsibilities and fulfilling them in due time. Regarding these activities, it was agreed that safe market studies and business plan had to be carried out. At the end, the participants made a positive evaluation of the work of the board and the Roma community of Kucova, which has demonstrated that it is an active and capable one in organizing the community.

CHAPTER 6

Prepared by: Blerina Gjeka, Program Manager

Scheme of Local Development and Leadership

Amaro Drom, with the support of the International Foundation Spolu is implementing the National Program "Community Development" in 9 Roma communities of various regions of Albania.

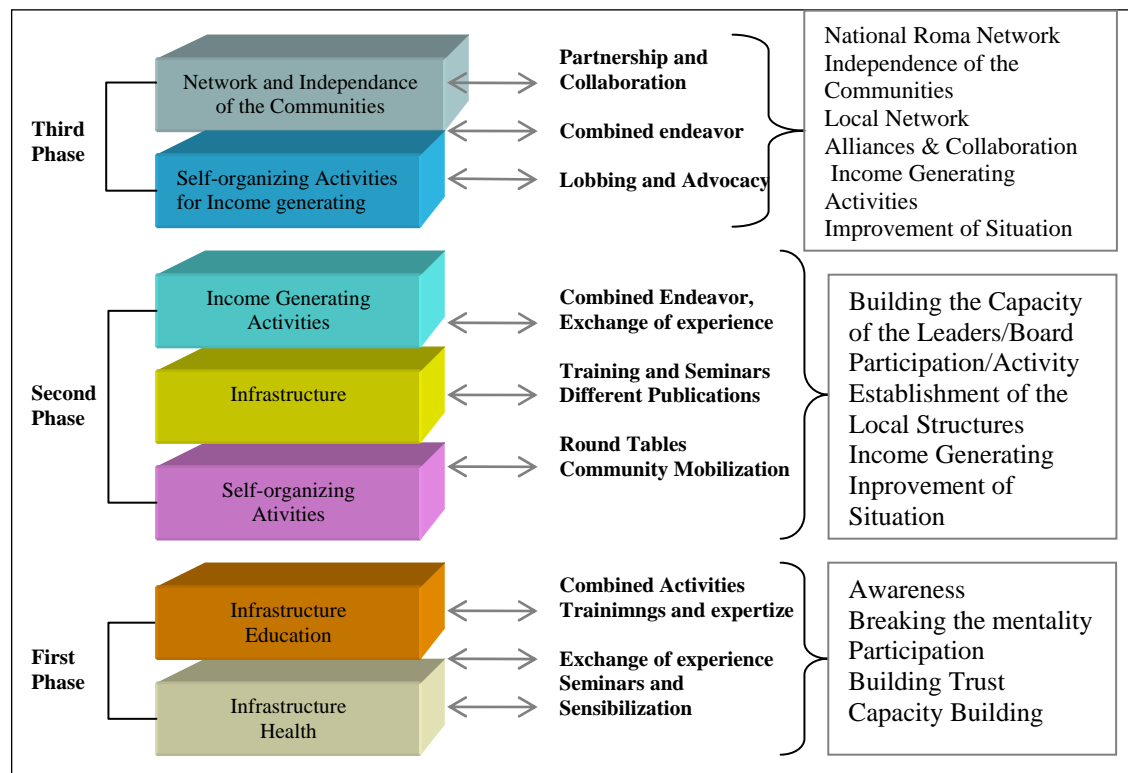
This Program aims at:

- The reduction of poverty at local level;
- The improvement of the social position of Roma people at local and national level;
- Lobbying and advocacy at local and national level.

Amaro Drom is fighting for the development of Roma communities, to further strengthen and integrate them, so that the members of this community may be respectable members of the society, preserving their own identity and being free to manifest it.

The improvement of relations between Roma people and Local Authorities, the representatives of local institutions and other members of the majority society constitutes another aspect of our work.

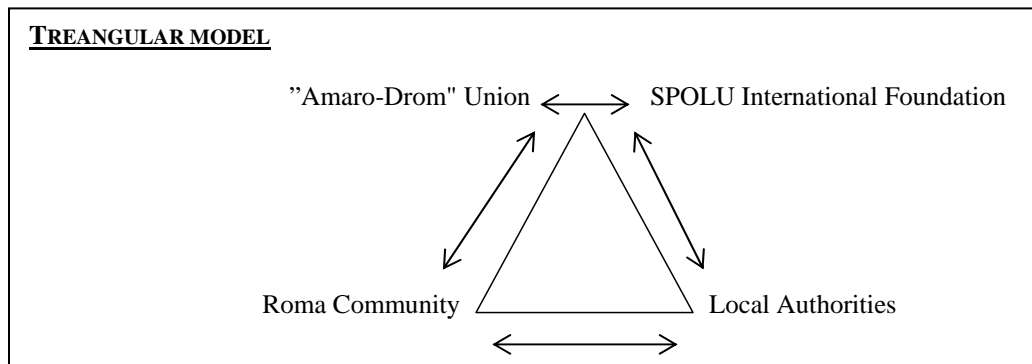
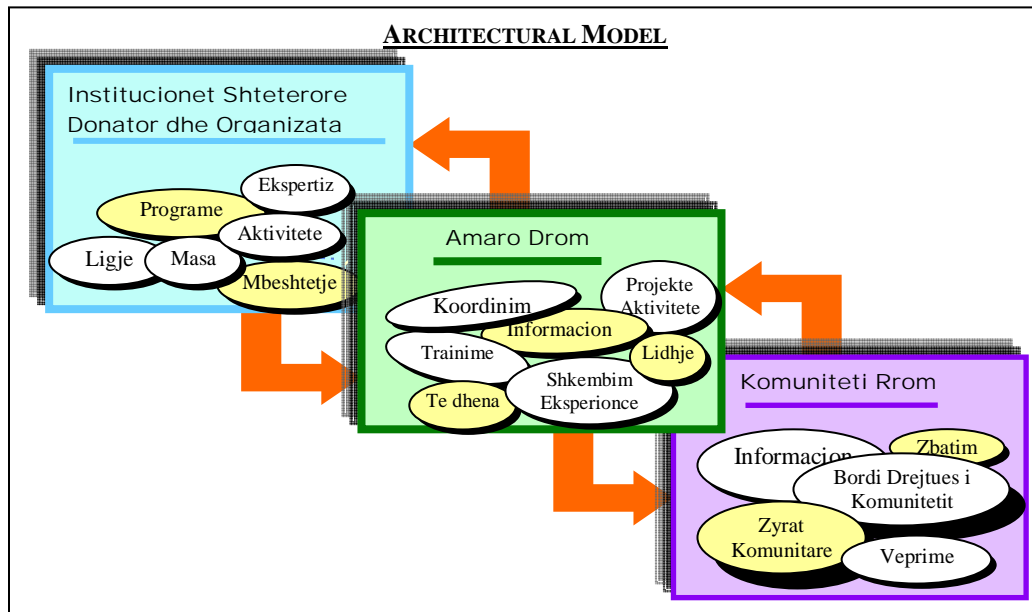
The strategy of short- term activities of the Amaro Drom Program "Community Development" 2003 – 2005



In the course of the implementation of this program, we have observed and studied the progress and development of local communities. The end of the year 2004 marked the termination of the second

stage of the program for some communities, which were first involved in the program. Hence, the final challenge emerged in terms of the establishment of official independent local organizations, partners of Amaro Drom.

Initially, Amaro Drom started its work as a mediator between local communities and different institutions (the architectural model), but very quickly our strategy changed and we sought that the community itself had to be the main actor in the development process (the triangle model):

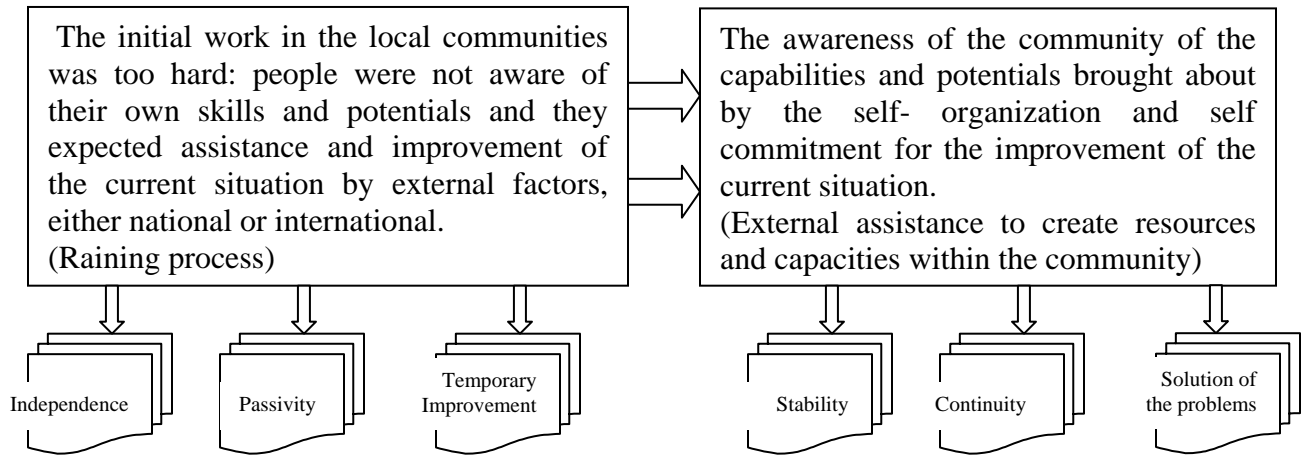


This scheme led to the obvious development of the community, its self confidence, confidence in the organizational and managing skills and capacities of Roma people in relation to local authorities.

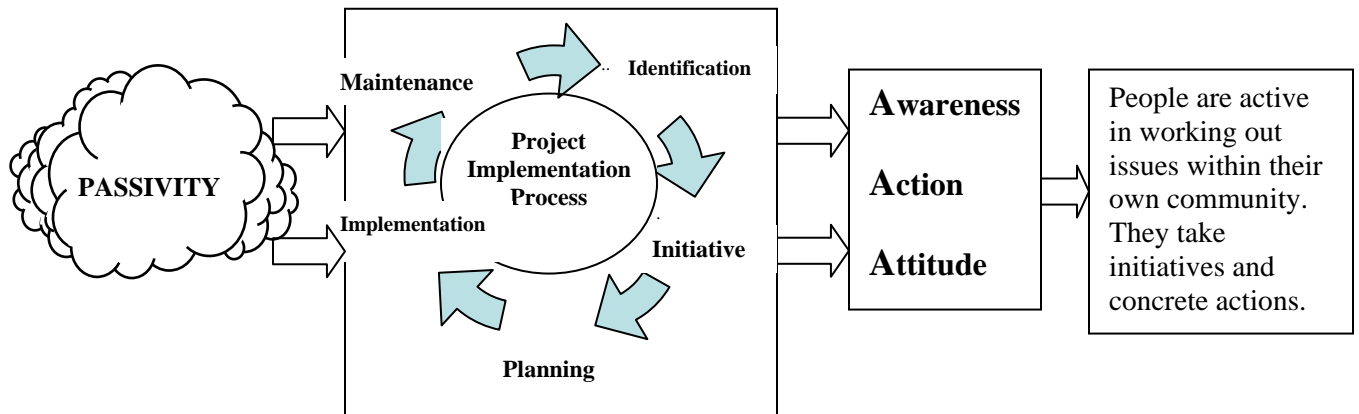
DEVELOPMENT PROCESS OF ROMA COMMUNITIES UNDER THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAM

”COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT”

1 – AWARENESS:



2 – ACTION:



3 – ATTITUDE AND MENTALITY:

People have a clear vision of the future. Initially, they sought economic assistance; after the completion of the first stage of the program, it was noted that the community sought a more extended support to improve the situation on their own, in order to provide long- term achievements and they are more open to cooperate with each other.

4 – LEADERSHIP CAPACITY:

The local board is capable to run and organize the community, to formulate and take actions for the solution of different problems, to negotiate with Local Authorities and assume relevant responsibilities for the implementation of activities.

The leaders of different groups (board, women and young people) are prepared to perform tasks, mobilize groups within the community and represent their community at local and national level.

5 - PARTICIPATION:

During the implementation of the projects and different activities, it is noted that the community people take an active part in them, under the impact of the following factors:

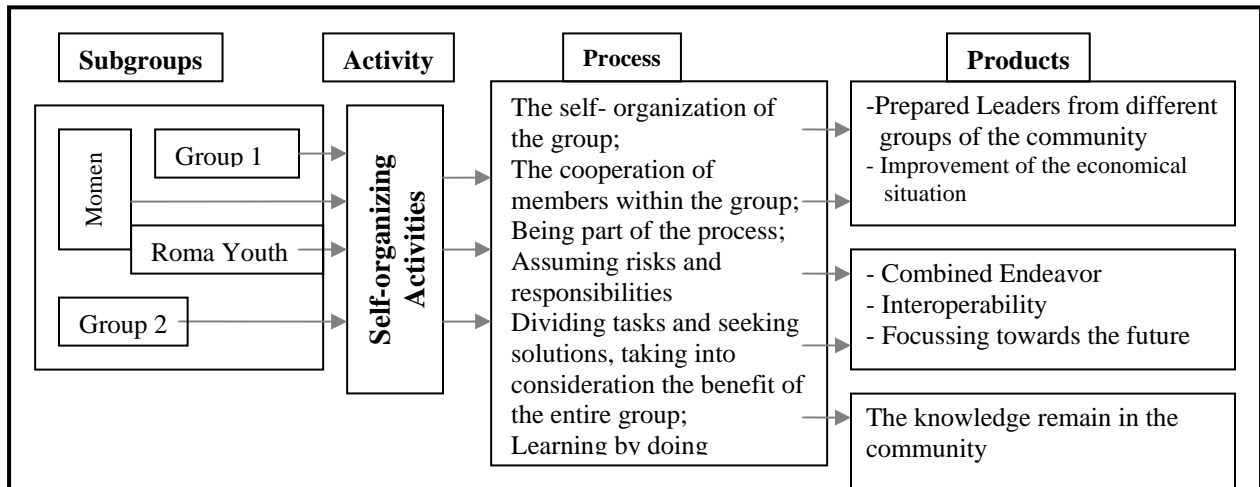
- Feeling of community (culture, coexistence, sharing common problems);
- Investment of resources (money, time and energy) by community members;
- Public nature (common goal, open meetings);
- Transparency and correctness;
- Awareness of the capacity and potentials to make changes;
- Self- esteem, self-initiatives, self- decision making and self- organization;
- Constructive cooperation relations with the majority society, the other ethnic groups and Local Authorities;
- Transparency, trust building and motivation.

6- SOCIAL STRUCTURES:

Sustainable local structures and subgroups have been created within the community.

Being involved in self- organizing projects, different subgroups (women, youngsters etc) have successfully carried activities, that required the self- organization of the group, the cooperation of the group members, allocation of responsibilities, being part of the process, assuming potential risks, dividing tasks and seeking potential solutions, taking into consideration the benefit of the entire group.

Such activities may include sports activities of young people, income- generating activities or self-organized activities of women carried out within the same community.



7- DEMOCRATIC DECISION- MAKING PROCESS:

The steering boards of the community have been voted by the community members. In order to provide a democratic decision making process, the boards consist of five, seven or nine representatives of different groups, including men, women and young people. Open and transparent decision making process in relation to the community is attached special importance. The board has had open meetings with the community in terms of different problems, meetings and discussions with different groups, specific kin groups and families within the community.

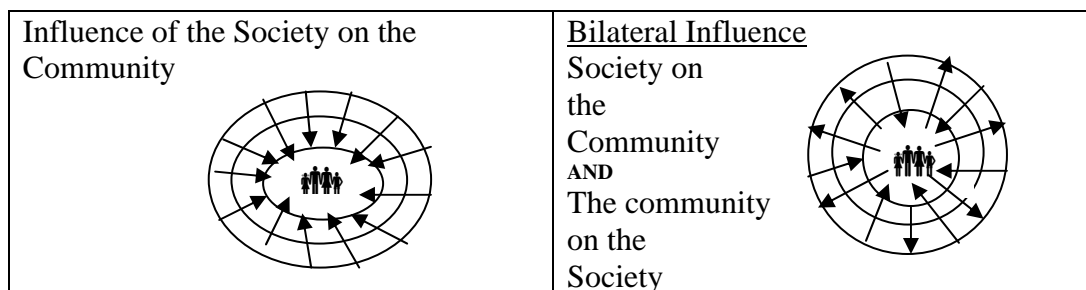
An essential component of this process is also the provision of a facility/office/center where the community and the board may meet and discuss different problems and issues.

Such community offices have been established in Levan, Morave, Kucove, Novosel and lately in Saver, Lushnje.

8 – VISIBILITY AND INFLUENCE:

The actions taken also aim at the visibility of the Roma community at local and national level, considering that these actions are to lead to the real improvement of living conditions, observance of human rights to the beneficiaries, to bring about changes not only within the community, but also in the society.

The change is to be sustainable and the solutions should not be of provisional character.



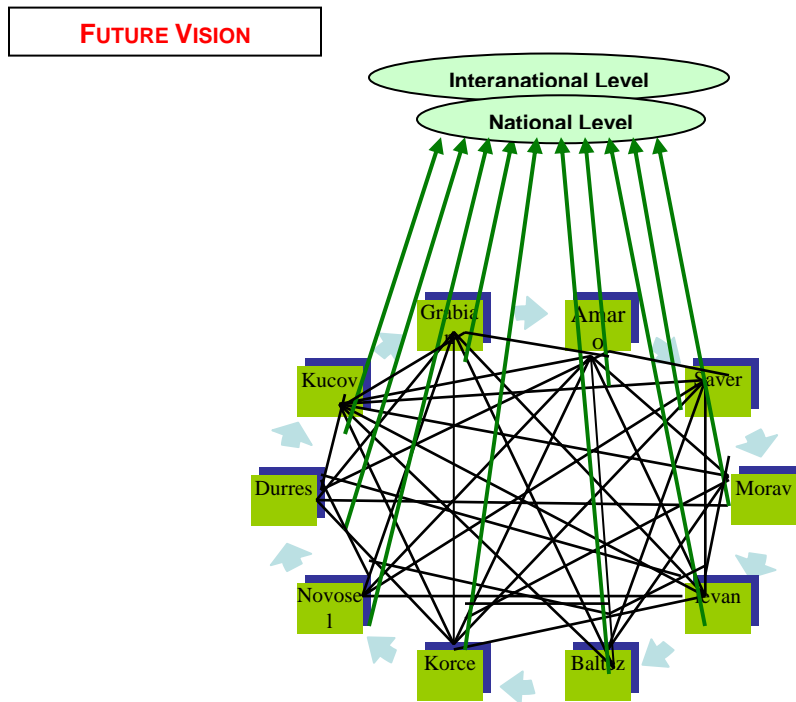
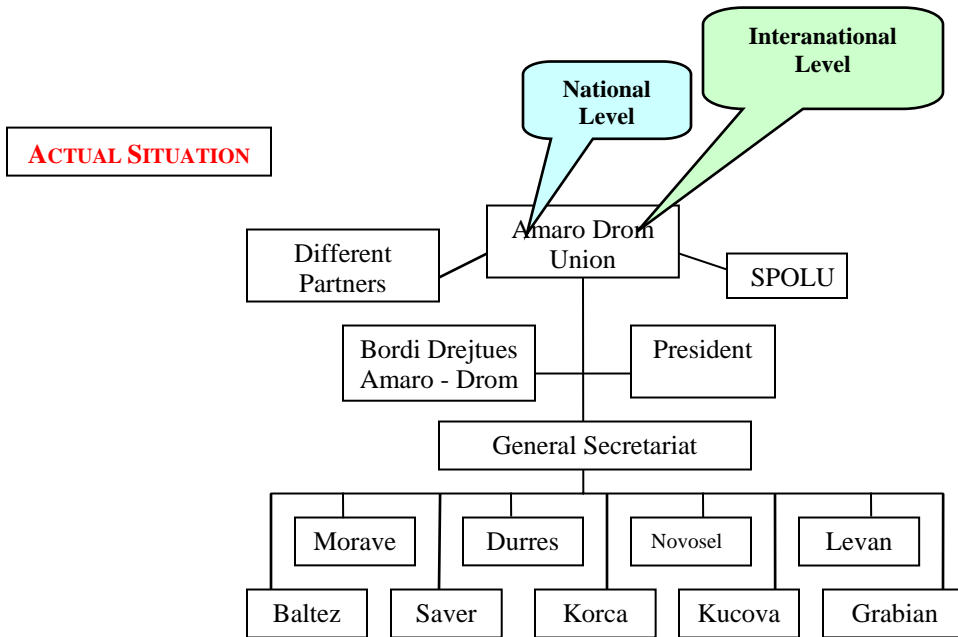
9 – INDEPENDENCE:

One of the indicators of the strengthening of the boards and local communities is their emerging position as independent official structures, partners of Amaro Drom.

The Roma leaders have identified the advantages and disadvantages of the independence.

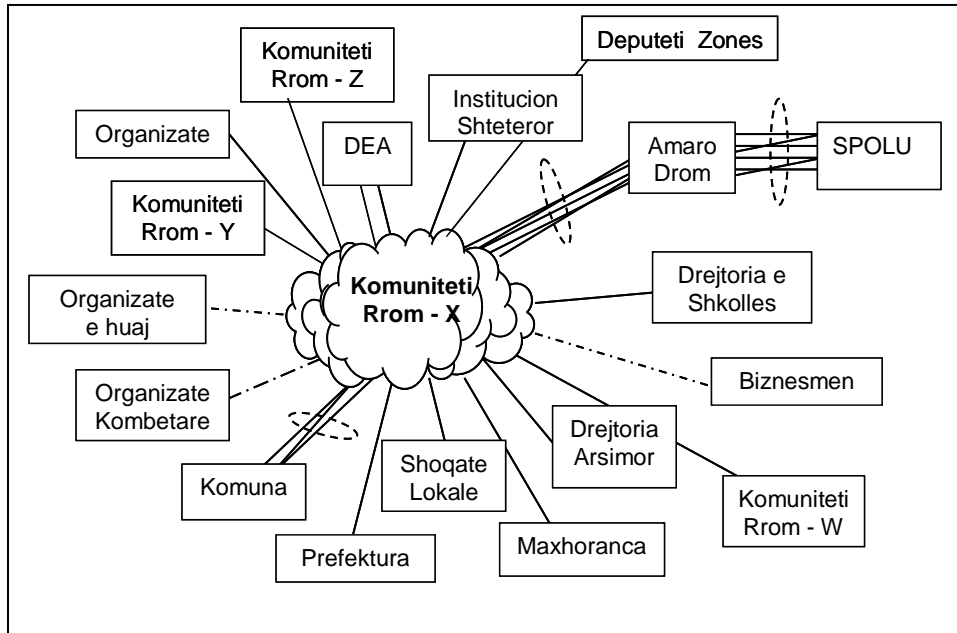
Advantages of the independence of the Local Boards	Disadvantages of the independence of the Local Boards
Self-organization /self- decision making	
Sensibilization of the community and the board	A strong sense of responsibility towards community
Development of leaders	
Enforcement of the board	You will have to spend time from your daily work, to serve to the community
Visibility of the community	
Mobilization to solve your own problems	
Solid cooperation with Local authorities	Difficult financial initial efforts
Self- initiative	
The voice of the community itself	
A strong sense of responsibility towards community	It takes time, energy and strong desire to work for the community
Solution of problems	
Enforcement of links within the community	
Enhancement of capacities of the board	

The scheme below shows the actual situation of Amaro Drom Union and the future vision of creating independent, partner roma communities.

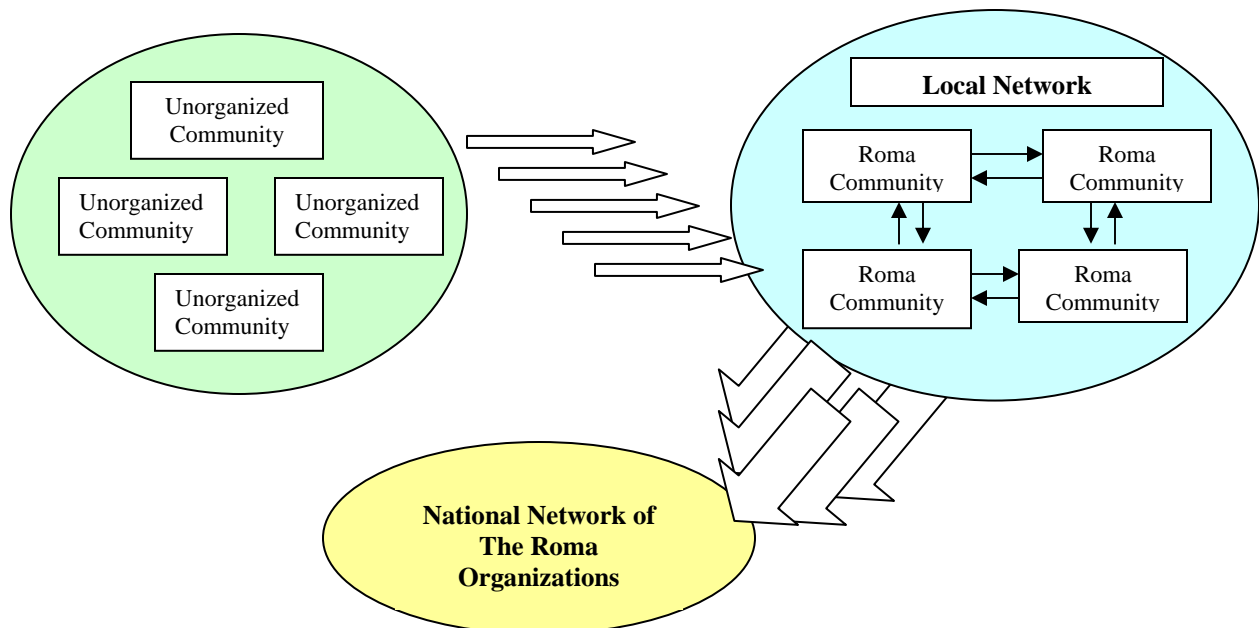


Another important step in the community development process is the creation of alliances with institutions, organizations and other elements that exert a positive impact on the community development process.

The local communities and the steering boards have already started to create their links through different types of cooperation, contacts and concrete work with a number of institutions, organizations, local authority representatives etc.



11 – NETWORK:



During different Seminars and Trainings the Roma leaders have identified the advantages and disadvantages of the establishment and participation in the Network.

ADVANTAGES OF NETWORK	DISADVANTAGES OF NETWORK
Exchange of Experience, exchange of information	It can be a passive Network for a period of time
Cooperation for projects of mutual interest	
A common VOICE for all Roma	
Expertise and assistance to each other	You will have to spend a part of your daily work time to serve to the community
They support each other	
They solve problems and learn from each- other's mistakes	
Avoidance of others' mistakes	Difficult financial initial efforts
Extension of your opportunities; You may win together, what you could not win alone.	
Safe protection of the members, who are not able to take initiatives by themselves.	It takes time, energy and strong desire to work for the community
Ample opportunities for financial resources	
Increase of transparency, credibility and impact of Local Organizations	If the network is broken, it can affect the image of the entire community.
Extension of the objective of your work	
Makes you more powerful	
Strong visibility of Roma community in the national and international arena	
Development of local leadership	
Joint ventures for the solution of major problems of the community at local and national level.	
Lobbying and common successful campaigns	
Greater responsibilities	
Advocacy for the amendment of legislation in favor to Roma community	
Mobilization of the community at specific moments/situations	

This was the scheme that we used to achieve concrete results and realize our objectives and aspirations. We are proud that our work improved somehow a situation supposed hopeless. We believe in this community, which has many values and is eager to work with devotion in order to improve its position in the Albanian society.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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