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FINAL EVALUATION REPORT

Economic and Social Empowerment for Roma and Egyptians – a booster for social inclusion (ESERE) Project

An independent evaluation commissioned by the UNDP in Albania

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	4
2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	5
3. INTRODUCTION	8
3.1. Background of the evaluation	8
3.2. Objectives of the evaluation	9
3.3. Evaluation questions	10
3.4. Methodology	11
4. EVALUATION FINDINGS	14
4.1. Relevance	14
4.2. Efficiency	23
4.3. Effectiveness	31
4.4. Impact	36
4.5. Sustainability	41
4.6. Gender equality	46
4.7. Human rights	47
5. LESSONS LEARNED AND BEST PRACTICES	49
5.1. Lessons learned	49
5.2. Best practices	49
6. CONCLUSIONS	53
7. RECOMMENDATIONS	57
7.1. Key recommendations	57
7.2. Additional specific recommendations	59
8. ANNEXES	61
8.1. Most significant systemic and case based stories	61
8.2. Terms of references	63
8.3. List of reviewed documents	67
8.4. List of stakeholders interviewed	69
8.5. Evaluation matrix	76

Disclaimer

This report was prepared by a team of external national and international evaluation specialists, namely Rea Nepravishta and Thomas Vasseur, under the review and oversight of the UNDP in Albania. The content, analysis and recommendation of this report, do not reflect necessarily the views of the UNDP or the European Union.

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1. LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ASPA	Albanian School of Public Administration
BCHM	Behavioral Change Model
CCF	Community Counselling Forums
CDP	Community Development Plans
CESS	Centre for Economic and Social Studies
CPD	Commissioner on Protection from Discrimination
CUP	Community Upgrading Projects
CSO	Civil Society Organizations
ESERE	Economic and Social Empowerment for Roma and Egyptians
EU	European Union
HDPC	Human Development Promotion Centre
ICBSS	Integrated Community Based Social Services
IDM	Institute for Democracy and Mediation
IRCA	Institute of Romani Culture in Albania
IS	Internship Scheme
LG	Local Government
MHSP	Ministry of Health and Social Protection
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NAPIRE	National Action Plan for the Integration of Roma and Egyptians
NES	National Employment Services
NGO	Non-Governmental Organizations
NPO	Non for Profit Organizations
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OJT	On the job training scheme
PO	Peoples' Advocate
PMC	Project Management Committee
RDE	Regional Directory of Education
R&E	Roma and Egyptian
RVA	Roma Versitas Albania
RWRC	Roma Women Rights Center
TLAS	Tirana Legal Aid Society
TOR	Terms of References
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
VET	Vocational Education and Training
WP	Work Package

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Findings

Relevance: ESERE has accurately responded to targeted community social inclusion challenges by applying a transformative approach that has stimulated all stakeholders - from community members to institutions and the civil society - constituting the integration set-up, to work more efficiently together, while deliver tangible results.

ESERE is an example of full involvement of the community in every step of implementation, and systematic reflection of the needs in the project. It was highly participatory and flexible to adapt to changes in the context that presented upcoming needs. ESERE is designed in line with the Albanian government priorities on R&E inclusion, but also feeding in the EU Progress Reports requirements and the UN SDGs

ESERE has been thoughtfully designed to be supportive of strategic and policy priorities: from the community, municipal level to the national level - providing a major boost to NAPIRE's results. The project also contributes to achieving other relevant sectoral priorities: Youth, Employment, Gender Equality, Anti-discrimination... In addition, ESERE is a showcase of support to Roma integration policies for the Western Balkans.

Efficiency: ESERE has been highly efficient when considering that the project has not only exceeded its targeted results but has established a qualitative, functioning model while producing profound changes in service delivery approach within a project cycle.

Effectiveness: There is unanimity that ESERE's effectiveness lies primarily in its integrated approach: addressing one need alone does not eradicate the problem, empowering the family in different fronts makes the difference. Another element of success is the capitalization of UNDP's experience in the R&E issues throughout the time.

While ESERE has delivered timely, quantitative outputs, the quality of its results at the municipal and central level, has been recognized and praised. Of highest significance, is the project's construction of an effective change of mentalities within the institutions but also within communities, about their respective mutual perceptions, interactions and awareness of

belonging to one coherent, effective system. ESERE has also contributed to bridging the gap between the Roma and Egyptian communities and the institutions of their country by shown the way for a better outreach to communities and more coherent, more coordinated response to the integration and basic living needs of the targeted groups.

Impact: ESERE has made an impact on all aspects on the complex, multidimensional facets of the integration process and reality of Roma and Egyptian communities in Albania. Beyond the effects of activities, the main impact lies in the transformation of communities and stakeholders' awareness, attitudes and work practices.

Sustainability: ESERE has produced sustainable results both for its end beneficiaries - as the majority of those engaged in professional upgrading and self-employment activities showed durable perspectives - and for the formal social inclusion set up in Albania. The model established has achieved a strong degree of institutionalization and can be made sustainable with further consolidation support.

Gender Equality and Human Rights: Both dimensions have been strongly and effectively integrated in the design and addressed as a priority during implementation. Gender and anti-discrimination-specific activities have been tailored based on the social inclusion obstacles and challenges girls and women and their discriminated groups are experiencing.

Lessons learned and best practices

A myriad of lessons learned have been identified. However, ESERE is much more than the sum of best practices as they are all coherently assembled in the architecture of the bottom-up social integration model.

Conclusions

Roma and Egyptian communities remain socially excluded in other regions of Albania and more resources are necessary to expand the ESERE model. ESERE is not just a project; it indeed embodies a model for R&E inclusion. Establishing ESERE as a successful system of inclusion of these most marginalized communities is the long-term goal and this is the reason why donor supporting should be considered as a social investment which should be pursued until it is proven fully sustainable. It seems relevant to assert that "If ESERE can make it with

Roma, ESERE can make it with any marginalized, vulnerable population”, given that it is the most excluded and vulnerable group in all aspects but also the most discriminated population.

Recommendations

Key Recommendation 1: Develop a project proposal for a next ESERE phase and actively mobilize funds (with the EU). Pursue to targeted effort of R&E inclusion: Fund Roma targeted project: Achieving Roma integration is much longer process than social inclusion. Because the Roma integration challenge is the highest, ESERE has built a strong Social Inclusion model, but in practice, the Roma integration model is not yet sufficiently anchored with municipalities & institutions; it needs to scale up results, lobby more with local and national governments, so they fully take over their roles in implementation

Specific recommendation 1.1: *Organise a workshop to take stock of all best practices to produce a “how to” manual” describing the field experience-based ESERE model with its mechanism of social inclusion.*

Specific recommendation 1.2: Include Roma and Egyptian communities from other municipalities with a view to replicate the model, while keeping as targeted locations the four existing Municipalities in order to bring the model at a more advanced stage and secure sustainability of results.

Key Recommendation 2: Strengthen the Roma and Egyptian inclusion model and use this opportunity to provide a tested and strong model for mainstreamed social inclusion in Albania: Use and extend the ESERE effective intervention to develop a model of inclusion that is not just relevant to Roma and Egyptian communities but also applicable to address inclusion of all excluded or marginalized communities in Albania (unique opportunity and practice, gives more sense to the social investment made by the EU).

Sub-recommendation 2.1: Set the conditionality of recommended ESERE next phase social inclusion activities to the release of central government matching (social funds) contribution

Sub-recommendation 2.2: Strengthen implementation practice: The process of integration can suffer no disruption.

Sub-recommendation 2.3: Build and promote stories of successful integration

Sub-recommendation 2.4: “Break the ghetto” Apply a more targeted approach by prioritizing support to the most excluded Roma and Egyptian communities, i.e., settlements physically isolated from urban centers.

3. INTRODUCTION

3.1. BACKGROUND OF THE EVALUATION

The context surrounding the challenge of Roma and Egyptian integration is characterized by direct and indirect barriers in accessing public services, stemming from some eligibility criteria they cannot comply with, lack of information or understanding of administrative procedures, as well as stigma and frequent discriminatory attitude from the majority population, despite important political, social and economic reforms, successfully implemented by Government of Albania. Long-term exclusion, treatment by the majority population and the relationship with government institutions has affected the living conditions of Roma and Egyptians. Studies show that the level of poverty among Roma is twice as high as the majority population. Regardless of their recognition as minority, Roma are both marginalized and socially excluded communities.

The *"Economic and Social Empowerment for Roma and Egyptians- a booster for social inclusion" (ESERE)* is a 42-month¹ project funded by the European Union and aims to further improve the social inclusion of most vulnerable communities consisting of Roma and Egyptians in Albania, with focus in the regions of Tirana, Durrës, Shkodra and Berat.

The project's purpose is to promote the economic and social empowerment of Roma and Egyptian communities in Albania by standardizing an innovative and integrated new approach at the policy and programming level and to provide integrated social inclusion models at sub-national level focusing in the regions of Tirana, Durrës, Shkodra and Berat.

ESERE has applied a multi-dimensional approach facilitating the horizontal and vertical communication and cooperation of the different stakeholders, including the target groups, at the national and sub-national/local level and implementing innovative tools, new models in flagship initiatives for increasing employment and vocational training opportunities, improving access to basic social services, strengthening institutional capacity, and establishing supportive mechanisms for those who live under severe circumstances. In the long term, this

¹ESERE has an initial implementation period of 36 months that has been extended by an additional 6month period.

aims to lift the Roma and Egyptian families out of poverty and support their sustainable inclusion in the Albanian society and labour market.

The project is composed of four work packages based on the four below objectives:

Objective 1 - Increased employment and skills development opportunities accessed by Roma and Egyptian women and men reduce the employment gap between R&E communities and the majority of the population.

Objective 2 - Community Led Local Development (CLLD) for R&E inclusion at the local level through integrated, inclusive and sustainable development.

Objective 3 - Procedures, models, tools and guidelines established and made operational based on the Integrated Approach and a Behavioural Change Model to support better access of Roma and Egyptian communities to basic equitable, inclusive and decentralised services and to foster a tolerant and inclusive society in Albania.

Objective 4 - The National Action Plan for Roma and Egyptian Integration in the Republic of Albania, 2015-2020, supported for implementation, monitoring and evaluation at the national, regional and local level.

ESERE is one of several interventions from UNDP's long-standing commitment in support of the inclusion of the Roma and Egyptian communities in Albania.

3.2. OBJECTIVES OF THE EVALUATION

The UNDP in Albania has commissioned an external evaluation to analyse ESERE Project's implementation process, the impact and changes that have occurred within beneficiaries and systems. It also attempted to identify encountered problems and constraints, define lessons learned and formulate recommendations for future follow-up interventions.

More specifically, the evaluation has focused on:

1. Measuring the extent to which ESERE project has fully implemented the activities, delivered outputs and attained outcomes and specifically measuring development results;
2. Generating substantive evidence-based knowledge, by identifying best practices and lessons learned and make recommendations for improved future assistance in the relevant area.

This external review has involved the following analytical actions:

1. Analysis of the project's design quality and internal coherence;
2. Analysis of the sustainability of project interventions;
3. Provision of feedback to the participating agencies and national counterparts on the soundness (defined as relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability) and impact of their approach in the project;
4. Evaluation of the impact of implemented actions, based on ESERE's workplan and Logframe;
5. Assessing the gender equality dimension of the intervention;
6. Determining the extent to which ESERE has applied a human rights-based approach and has influenced the achievement of the outputs and outcomes
7. Extracting general lessons learned and recommendations for future interventions Based on the analysis conducted over the experience of ESERE;
8. Providing the donor with information on impact of the specific contribution of the project to social inclusion of Roma and Egyptian communities in Albania.
9. Formulating recommendations for planning and formulation of the future replication of the project in other areas.

3.3. EVALUATION QUESTIONS

An Evaluation Matrix with afferent Evaluation Sub-Questions covering the several aspects of the Key Evaluations Questions was developed and is annexed to this report. The evaluation questions have been grouped around the five OECD evaluation criteria as well as around Gender Equality and Human Rights. The Evaluation Matrix is reflected in the structure of this report.

3.4. METHODOLOGY

The evaluation has been conducted by an independent team of consultants, comprised of a National Specialist and an International Specialist, tasked with the following activities:

- Desk review of relevant project-related documents and UNDP evaluation policies and, based on this information,
- Inception report including a methodology tailored to the assignment, an evaluation matrix based on suggested key evaluation questions, a work plan and data collection tools to be applied during the assignment,
- Field visit phase preparation: The Evaluation Team has established a field schedule of interviews with key project stakeholders and beneficiaries.
- Field phase involving project sites visits and beneficiaries, stakeholder interviews in the four municipalities covered by the project in Albania as well as key international and national-level organisations.
- Field mission debriefing workshop to present initial findings and recommendations to the main project stakeholders as well as to gather feedback expressed during the venue.
- Mid-term evaluation draft report featuring the methodology applied, findings, lessons learned and clear strategic and operational, stakeholder-specific recommendations with possible adjustments for the remaining period of project's implementation, as well as recommendations for similar interventions.
- Mid-term evaluation final report integrating feedback comments to the draft report.

This evaluation has used the international standards as recommended in UNDP, UNEG, OECD-DAC and EU evaluation guides. It has also abided by UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation.

The review has gathered qualitative and quantitative data using the following tools and methods, commonly used in the field of social science:

- Review and analysis of information, directly related to the project (project literature, policy, strategy and study documents);
- Internet-based research and review of publications relevant to the evaluation thematic and context;
- Individual and focus group, face-to-face interviews;

The external review of the project has applied a comprehensive process; guiding the assignment from its inception to the production of the present report, according to a sequence of activities, organised around the following phases:

Preparation phase (February 19th to March 3rd):

1. Remote evaluation start-up meeting with the UNDP ESERE project team
2. Desk review and analysis of project-related documents
3. Submission of the inception report featuring the design of the evaluation methodology, information collection tools, workplan, evaluation matrix and stakeholder list
4. Logistics and stakeholder interview arrangements with the support of UNDP

Interview and field phase (March 4th to 12th):

1. Stakeholder interviews and visits to project sites (see annexed workplan)
2. Debriefing workshop with presentation of initial key findings and recommendations; feedback from stakeholders

Reporting phase (March 15th to April 12th):

1. Review and processing of data collected in the field
2. Submission of draft mid-term evaluation report to UNDP (April 1st)
3. Feedback comments to the report from UNDP
4. Integration of feedback comments & submission of the final version evaluation report (By April 12th)

Field mission

The evaluation team has conducted individual interviews as well as focus group discussion with a number of beneficiaries. This has involved interviews in the Municipalities of Tirana, Durrës, Shkodra, Berat and surroundings.

The evaluation team has split in order to reach out to the maximum number of beneficiaries with the time imparted. Indeed, this has allowed to establish a strong sample of beneficiary information.

4. EVALUATION FINDINGS

4.1. RELEVANCE

ESERE - both in its conception and implementation - is highly relevant answer to relevant policy priorities; vertically (from the local municipal level up to the national, Western Balkan and EU level) and horizontally (addressing all concerned sectors and stakeholders). (Answer to Evaluation Question 1.1.)

1. The relevance of ESERE is strong and wide. It is strong as the project answers the most acute situation of social exclusion, given the height of social inclusion obstacles and depth of needs experienced by the Roma and Egyptians - especially the Roma (see several indicators including Regional Roma Survey). It is wide as ESERE is directly aligned with policy priorities at the local level in the context of the decentralization reform where municipalities are handed over more social inclusion competences, including the integration of Roma and Egyptians.

2. ESERE project was designed as a result of a consultation process between the EU Delegation and UNDP data and lessons learnt stemming from current and past programmes. It was in line with EU priorities in the country, as foreseen by the EU Progress Report on Albania's accession process to the European Union. Specifically, the design of ESERE reflected the orientations of the EU IPA evaluation. Moreover, ESERE took into account the findings and recommendations of the previous programme "Supporting Social Inclusion of Roma and Egyptian Communities" (SSIREC) funded by the EU and Implemented by UNDP.

3. ESERE is relevant with UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) for Albania and feeds in the Outcome number 2 on Social Cohesion, particularly the Output 2.3 on Social Inclusion and Protection. Though, ESERE is not limited only to Output 2.3 because it covers a variety of other outputs related to health, education, child protection (...) as a result of the integrated approach it entails. ESERE is streamlined in the Progress Report 2017 Programme of Cooperation and Sustainable Development 2017 - 2021. In addition, ESERE presents an important contribution to the 2018 Joint Work Plans - Mid - Year Review, Government of Albania and United Nations Programme of Cooperation for Sustainable Development 2017 - 2021.

4. More than just creating an outstanding model for R&E integration, ESERE represents a direct and major implementation of the NAPIRE's objectives and activities. ESERE has not just been supporting NAPIRE, it has indeed been providing a significant boost of the advancement towards the Action Plan's objectives. The project objectives are also contributing to the progress of several correlated policies in the area of Gender Equality, Anti-Discrimination, Youth Employment, Vocational Training (insert footnote reference each Nat policy). ESERE also makes a significant contribution to key Western Balkan regional initiatives (*please see relevant section below*).

5. ESERE is relevant to human rights and gender equality issues that are specific to Roma and Egyptian communities. The project activities are directly addressing the discrimination experienced by both communities in their access to public services, employment and education. The provision of activities Roma and Egyptian women and girls through education and related support are appropriate to protect women from the many threats to their integration and empower them towards more gender equality. As such, ESERE activities are supportive of several associated sectoral strategies.²

6. ESERE is not just relevant as an intervention limited in time but also as a potential model for the two of the most marginalized and discriminated communities in Albania, the Western Balkans and Europe at large. This UNDP project is one of the agency's longer-term efforts to support the inclusion of populations that have been living at the margin of the local societies for so long. The lessons learned, best practices development, the capacities built from previous interventions have been factored in for ESERE to design more than an implementation approach, but rather a model chiselled to the multiple dimensions of integration and based on a vision of sustainable inclusiveness.

7. A model for extreme marginalization inclusion that is fitting the context of Albania, and potentially the wider Western Balkan region. While Roma exclusion is characterized with varying degrees of intensity across the region, the nature of segregation factors, the institutional challenges and the policy priority share a lot in common. The years of continuous efforts and social investment for Roma inclusion, crowned with the changes shaped by this intervention, have results in a complex, integrated method, highly regarded beyond the borders of Albania. The value of this integrated approached lies in the fact that is it not just

² National Strategy and Action Plan on Gender Equality, Women Employment

concept-based but also reality-based. And given the similar features characterizing the countries of the region, the potential cross-border relevance of ESERE as a model is high for the Western Balkans.

ESERE has used its direct access to targeted communities, extensive consultation and knowledge from previous interventions to identify deep-rooted needs and answer top priorities of the targeted communities with accuracy. The review of the project implementation has confirmed ESERE's response has been highly relevant. (Answer to Evaluation Question 1.2.)

ESERE has provided a highly relevant response to the needs to its target groups but also to the way to address inclusion challenges in a sustainable manner. The exclusion of Roma and Egyptian is multi-faceted and incredibly acute as it is not most but all of the dimensions of their human development that are endangered: literacy, higher education, health, livelihood, housing, domestic stability, acceptance by majority community, interaction with State Institutions. The experience of previous endeavors has taught practitioners that socio-economic inclusion will fail if only some of the obstacles are tackled separately.

The most recent regional Roma survey conducted by the World Bank provides an exhaustive illustration of the nature and multiplicity of the gaps and inclusion indicators reaching far below national averages, the field of education, labour market access, health, housing or documentation³.

The multi-level (from grassroots to central), multi-dimensional (inclusive of all categories of stakeholders), and pluri-sectoral (education, employment, health...) activities deployed by ESERE is the holistic and combined response to the diversity of needs and priorities of targeted communities: from educational exclusion prevention, access to basic health services, child care services to decent labour market access

The project was designed to continuously consult the target groups on their needs through a community-based approach. Indeed, Community Counselling Forums were set and functional in all the regions with the aim to gauge and address the needs of the target groups in a

³See "Roma at a glance Albania", Regional Roma Survey supported by the EU, the World Bank and UNDP.

participatory bottom-up approach. This way of working has built trust among the community and boosted empowerment of community members to feel ownership over the project.

In particular, the project has mainstreamed throughout the work packages a working model that boosts active citizenship and participation. At an initial stage, ESERE has led preparation of Local Analyses Packages that provide specific regional information on Roma and Egyptian communities. As mentioned, the 13 Community Counselling Forums (CCF) have served as direct channels that enhance consultation of citizens and reflection of their needs in the project. The high number of meetings organized by the CCFs (at least 246 until the time of reporting) is an evidence of the deep outreach of the project into the communities. During the focus groups discussions with the beneficiaries of the project, some beneficiaries expressed that “for the first time they felt that their opinion mattered, and their voice was being heard when planning activities for the Roma community”.

In addition, another component of the project that seemed to duly assess the needs of the beneficiaries is the CSOs support package. A capacity and training needs assessment for R&E NGOs was conducted which identified a series of training topics. This preceded the launch of the Call for Proposals for the provision of small grants. Representatives of CSOs interviewed confirm their full involvement in the whole process and they serving as bridges between the project and the communities they are active in.

Owing to a presence at the community level and regular interaction with key municipal and central stakeholders, ESERE has been strongly positioned to react rapidly to specific field situation as well as to adapt to policy-level and concrete changes occurred in the field of Roma and Egyptian social inclusion. (Answer to Evaluation Question 1.3.)

ESERE’s close and constant interaction at grassroots, local and central level has given the project a close grasp with its context, placed it in a central position to adjust to changes in the sector. In actual fact, the present reports explain in further details how ESERE has been a strong factor of change in the sector during the 42 months of its implementation.

More concretely, there are two crucial events related to R&E communities that required the adaptation of the project to upcoming changes in the context. The first is related to the eviction of the Roma families living in Bregu i Lumit in Tirana in June 2016. Since the first

moment, ESERE purposefully lobbied with the Municipality to stop evictions. Indeed, the staff put pressure to the institution stressing the fact that persons could not be evicted without offering them an alternative for housing. An instrument used in this occasion was also the provision of guidelines on evictions “Basic Principles and Guidelines on Development-Based Evictions and Displacement”. As a result of the advocacy efforts leveraged also at EU level, the eviction process was prevented and the relevant actors’ joint efforts to find an alternative solution for the families.

At this point, ESERE staff provided its assistance since the beginning of the coordinative intervention, starting with the support for drafting of an Intervention Plan for helping the families affected. Consequently, the project oriented a bulk of actions and services based in Tirana to the benefit of the evicted families. ESERE staff was also a crucial part of the joint technical group that managed and coordinated the interventions of this emergency situation. In addition, as interviewees confirmed, the know-how that UNDP shared with the government regarding the principles on eviction was reflected also in the recently approved Law on Social Housing in the parts that deal with eviction related issues.

The second event is related to the Transitory Programme for Roma and Egyptians Recyclers in collaboration with Tirana Municipality and Eco Tirana which was not initially foreseen in the project document but represented an effort of ESERE to contextualize the intervention to the real needs of Roma recyclers. Challenges were faced due to the fact that the formalization process encountered several barriers due to the long practice of informality and the underling mentality. In this environment, ESERE was able to transform an informal activity into a formalized work ensuring dignity and due working conditions for the people engaged. This was a creation of the project that fully responded to newly emerging circumstances.

It can convincingly be affirmed that ESERE kept the pace of the changing environment and was able to reinvent itself in front of upcoming needs.

ESERE's design is very appropriate both in the needs and challenges it addresses but, equally importantly, in the holistic way it supports the social inclusion of Roma and Egyptian communities. (Answer to Evaluation Question 1.4.)

ESERE has been responding effectively to the needs of its targeted populations blending the following fundamental elements in the design of the intervention:

- Targeted assistance to the identified community needs and priorities: from education to employability;
- Simultaneous and coordinated coverage of all needs mentioned above;
- Appropriate architecture of implementation design: involving participation at Micro, Meso and Macro level, enhancing interaction among key stakeholder categories (citizens/users of services, local and central governments, the civil society);
- A vision holding the above-mentioned architecture guided by the intention of building a durable solution for the inclusion of Roma and Egyptian communities;
- Employing the “right profile” showing the relevant blend a background, experience, and community belonging. With approximately 50% of staff from Roma and Egyptian communities, ESERE employees have established the absolutely necessary relation between communities and institutions.

The project logical framework features clearly formulated objectives with coherently supportive activities. The implementation progress and attainment of outputs and objectives is easily measurable as SMART⁴ indicators have been developed at all levels.

Additionally, the re-launch of the ROMALB database and the fact that ESERE activities are directly supporting the implementation of NAPIRE is re-enforcing the monitoring framework of both the project activities as well as of national efforts towards Roma and Egyptian inclusion altogether.

⁴SMART: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic/Relevant, Time-bound

ESERE had identified potential synergies with other complementary donor-funded projects during its conception and has coherently used the potential of those synergies. (Answer to Evaluation Question 1.5.)

There has been a good level of synergy with other donor-funded project, though the several new practices introduced by projects to Municipalities could have been conducted in a more harmonized manner.

Effective linkages have been established with other projects implemented in Albania, including UN's Joint Programme "Leave No One Behind for Social Inclusion" with which ESERE has achieved three interlinked outcomes⁵ and Roma Education Fund's activities⁶.

Synergies have also been developed with various relevant projects with a wider Western Balkans regional scope, more concretely with the following projects:

1. "EU Regional Action for Roma Education: Increased education opportunities and employability for Roma Students and Roma Youth in Western Balkans and Turkey;
2. Joint DG NEAR and Council of Europe Programme "Promoting good governance and Roma empowerment at local level" ROMACTED,
3. EU-funded project" Joint Initiative to Empower Roma Civil Society in the Western Balkans and Turkey",
4. EU-funded RCC "Roma Integration 2020" project,
5. Joint UNDP/EU/WB "Regional Roma Surveys".

In particular, ROMACTED has reportedly reflected a series of good practices from ESERE regarding participatory local planning, including in the infrastructure interventions as well as the model for the community-based actions that enhance democratic participation. Roma Education Fund similarly with ESERE has embraced the link of education and employment in its programme. On the other hand, the Regional Roma Survey programme has mainstreamed the model of ROMALB at regional level. These are concrete examples that show how ESERE's model impacted also other programmes including at a wider regional level.

⁵1. Empowered Persons with Disabilities, Roma and Egyptians and vulnerable women to request and have access to social services as a pre-condition to improve their lives; 2. Enabled Municipalities to effectively manage the provision of rights-based social services and promote social inclusion; 3. Enhanced capacities of national institutions to implement their policy framework, to fund and provide social services.

⁶ Early Childhood Care and Development Project support to equitable access to inclusive education to Roma children.

However, ESERE is unique as it is the only project involving concreted activities. ESERE has provided tangible services directly to the communities, being situated inside the affected areas, having employed Roma and Egyptian community members, consulting continuously R&E people on their needs and priorities, thus with a manifested participatory approach witnessed by the interviews and focus groups. The services provided do not address only one need alone (such as education, employment, registration etc.), but instead tend to eradicate the problematic situation in its roots by confronting the series of risks and social plagues with an integrated approach. In conclusion, while other projects generally tend to tackle one aspect of the social challenge, ESERE is unique in addressing a variety of aspects of the phenomenon with a vertical approach that ranges from the policy level to the deeply community-based one.

The model promoted by ESERE is based on a highly participatory “social partnership” of relevant stakeholders and its implementation has demonstrated relevant actors have been involved to a high degree. (Answer to Evaluation Question 1.6.)

All relevant stakeholders have been involved in the design and implementation of ESERE and for a period of time stretching back even before the project for most actors.

UNDP previous projects - including SSIREC-have involved close collaborations with Roma and Egyptian communities, the civil society and Albanian institutions. Several of the same actors have been consulted in the design of ESERE while additional civil society organisations have been given significant roles in key activities of ESERE.

The UNDP as an agency and the ESERE project have indeed maintained partnerships with the key actors in inclusion in Albania already several years before the project started.

ESERE in its conception⁷ and realization is multi-stakeholder by nature and its success relies on institutions, communities, civil society organisations playing a pro-active role in the social integration process. ESERE, by launching competitive calls for CSO to implement community initiatives or for local institutions to participate to Community Counselling Forums, is very much stimulating, more than just participating to the implementation of its activities.

⁷ESERE's approach combines the EU-supported Community Lead Local Development (CLLD) method, with UNDP's Area-Based Development (ABD) principle, and the Integrated Territorial Development for Social Inclusion and involves all relevant stakeholders at all levels.

UNDP's long-standing commitment and direct field-level involvement with the targeted communities have provided a unique access to understanding communities' issues and needs. The project achievements have confirmed the real priorities of the target populations has been properly assessed. (Answer to Evaluation Question 1.7.)

The availability of relevant data and UNDP previous and related on-going interventions have ensured a highly informed, thorough analysis and deep understanding of Roma and Egyptians living conditions and integration obstacles.

UNDP Albania's long-standing involvement in the integration effort of both communities and the agency's concrete level of collaboration with essential actors in Albania, from the community to the central government level made ESERE benefit from a close and directly access to beneficiary issues and needs as well as from an updated awareness of the changing legal, political and social context.

UNDP has learned lessons from its previous interventions and UNDP's previous SSIREC project experience has largely fed an understanding on the shortcomings of the previous overall Roma and Egyptians existing integration setup in Albania.

Several of UNDP ESERE staff were already previously active in the integration venture at the local level and have been consulting with local actors and bringing their own perspectives. One concrete example of this has been the choice to include a Roma and Egyptian profiling exercise as a project activity (activity 1.4.- Employability Profiling); a decision stemming from a recommendation from the SSIREC final evaluation report and also backed by the fact that previous employment solutions had been insufficiently tailored to the specific employment challenges of unemployed community members. As a result, this has led to ESERE developing a range of labour integration solutions reflecting the diversity of professional situations within the Roma and Egyptian populations.

ESERE has been more than relevant and supportive of NAPIRE 2015-2020 implementation; it has made a significant contribution to its implementation. (Answer to Evaluation Question 1.8.)

The contribution of ESERE to the advancement of the NAPIRE is indisputable. In terms of quantitative achievements, most interviewed stakeholders agree on the fact that the results of NAPIRE are mostly the results of the ESERE project. But, beyond the numbers, ESERE has given a major impetus and energy to advance the social inclusion of Roma and Egyptian communities in Albania.

4.2. EFFICIENCY

The project means have been utilized in an optimal manner, using proven and efficient implementation mechanisms. (Answer to Evaluation Question 2.1)

ESERE resources have been utilized in an efficient manner when considering the results achieved and strong progress toward the higher objective of making Roma and Egyptian inclusion work thanks to a system designed to be sustainable.

At the time of the evaluation, most of the project funds have been exhausted while most outputs have been delivered and several key target results have already been exceeded - or are well under the way to be reached.

The project means have been used efficiently owing to the fact that the distribution of funds has been guided by a detailed strategy. ESERE's multidimensional approach is reflected through a justified balance of resource allocation prioritizing the local level, granting substantial resources to the Roma and Egyptian civil society (circa 7.5% of total budget) and an adequate level of support to the essential budget post for human resources (circa 20 % of total budget). One project is not enough to address the Roma and Egyptians integration needs in all sectors, let alone social housing which, by nature, requires high-scale levels of funds. However, the ESERE budget has been striking a fair balance of direct assistance between essential integration needs (circa 25% of total budget allocated to infrastructure and circa 11% to employment promotion programme component).

Indeed, an appropriate focus has been placed on human resources as a key leverage to achieving results and success (Efficiency is the result of human performance & defined by ESERE team commitment). This budget share does not only correspond to providing project employment but should be seen as a longer-term investment of individuals who have played and who are likely to continue playing an essential role into keeping functional the complex mechanism of Roma and Egyptian social inclusion.

The size of the ESERE project in terms of budget appears to create large impact with a contained use of resources. Indeed, smaller projects than this one does not achieve the desired impact as they address partially the needs of the R&E communities. Larger projects would probably be not fully cost-effective. The size of ESERE project has apparently created the “economy of scale” effect for which with a given number of staff available, a larger impact is achieved.

All project activities have been delivered timely. (Answer to Evaluation Question 2.2)

Overall, ESERE activities have been delivered as per the project plan and the extended implementation period is expected to attain, and in several instances, exceed the expected results.

The evaluation has found that most activities had already been delivered by the end of December 12.2018, with several activities - under the Work Package 1 - having already exceeded its targets, in terms of the number of employment solutions provided.

The exchanges with the ESERE team and implementing partners are all indicating that all activities will be completed by the end of June 2019. Only a few activities related to infrastructure works had been postponed but are also planned to be completed by the project's end.

With results exceeding objectives both qualitatively and quantitatively, ESERE has optimized the conversion of resources into results. (Answer to Evaluation Question 2.3.)

RESULTS	NUMBER OF BENEFICIARIES
ESERE direct beneficiaries	<i>18006 Roma and Egyptians</i>
Other beneficiaries	<i>Over 300 Public Officials trained at central and local levels</i>
Labour market integration through 7 ALMMs	<i>720 R&E (270 Roma/450 Egyptians - 248 Females/231 Males)</i>
Community-based services provided	<i>Over 1,403 basic services</i>
Community Upgrading Projects	<i>10 so far, 12 by end of project</i>
Improved infrastructure, sewage system, water connection etc.	<i>at least 2000 direct beneficiaries</i>
Beneficiaries of inclusive education & disaggregation	<i>1772 parents and students</i>
Beneficiaries of adult education	<i>83 direct beneficiaries</i>
R&E CSOs involved and strengthened	<i>20 Community Development Initiatives</i>
Direct beneficiaries of the R/E CSO initiatives	<i>13,800 direct beneficiaries</i>
Inclusive Policy Responses adopted at Central and Municipal levels	<i>15 Policy Measures adopted</i>
Several other key qualitative achievements	<i>Bringing services closer to communities Opening minds towards social inclusion.</i>

ESERE resources have been converted into convincing results for the four Work Packages

Most importantly, ESERE has been convincing about the qualitative dimension of its results

ESERE's cost analysis should not be reduced to the cost-per-beneficiary ratio (Cost/beneficiary is not an indicator of cost effectiveness). If comparing to project with limited sustainability (short-term employment, inclusion, Roma assistance), ESERE boasts higher cost/benefits ratio. Measuring the cost effectiveness of ESERE requires to understanding that the project is about establishing and testing a model. These are the preliminary phases to developing an effective process and for this model to reaching a functional stage has required making a social investment. Thus, the cost effectiveness of ESERE can be measured by the cost of building the model (over several project phases) and its return of investment (i.e. the social inclusion model appropriate, context-tailored, functioning, delivering - lasting - results and replicable (to other regions and other social groups).

The expected depth of central government commitment has not been as much convincing as ESERE's project results.

Municipalities in general - Berat and Shkodra in particular - have expressed concerns about the scarce contribution of central government funds that should be decentralized to municipalities in the context of the 2015 territorial reform in Albania. Indeed, it seems that funds for social inclusion remain scarce in comparison to the needs of the population, but a comparative analysis is needed in order to grasp how the situation has evolved over time. Before ESERE started implementation, the social contribution at Municipality level basically meant the payment of social financial support for families in need. There were no employees offering direct social services to the communities, including for Roma and Egyptian ones. ESERE project reportedly put a lot of efforts through intense advocacy actions at several institutional levels in order to commit the Municipalities to introduce social staff in their Municipal structures. This is a major achievement of the project, in an area where social contribution had been very limited. It is an engagement of the Municipalities in financial terms (i.e. recruiting community center social workers, health staff... on the municipality payroll), but it also affects the municipal agenda by re-directing/shaping the way of setting local priorities and allocating municipal funding. In addition, more at a policy level, the recently approved secondary legislation on social services finds a preliminary model of implementation in the practice that ESERE has built under the present project. This is of paramount impact in a

context where good legislation is binding, but its practical implementation remains reportedly problematic. ESERE has contributed to build a practice for the by-law's implementation at an early stage in the targeted areas.

While ESERE has been successful in lobbying to institutionalize a great deal of the practices the project has introduced, the future level of financial commitment from the government remains an opened question. Indeed, getting the government to fully implement NAPIRE - and delegate resources adequate to the cost of Roma and Egyptian integration needs is a challenge that stretches beyond the capacity of an international project.

The three pillars of ESERE's efficient have been (1) proximity and supportive management, (2) outstanding human resource quality and dedication, (3), pro-active coordination. (Answer to Evaluation Question 2.4.)

The crucial role of physical field presence backed by a management of proximity also active at the central level have been key factors of efficiency.

ESERE is a complex project to manage in that it operates numerous activities - 19 across 4 components -, through different modalities (competitive call for proposal, contracting, counselling, field work...), with multiple partners, in four different geographical locations, at various level, including the regional and central government level.

The evaluation has found ESERE management has efficiently handled the demanding management task through a well-adjusted project steering committee structure but at least, equally importantly, the level of dedication and the high relevance of staff profile and personalities are to be accounted for the strong impact the project has made in the field.

The ESERE team is one wealth of the project resources: All staff have been engaged in social inclusion- often of Roma and Egyptian communities - for many years and are enjoying a unique understanding of the concrete challenges faces by excluded populations. With half of ESERE originating from those communities, they have been at the center of establishing relations and building trust between parties that previously would not talk to each other.

The spirit and human commitment of the team has been very strongly praised by all stakeholders, starting from the communities itself.

The efficiency of coordination mechanisms is the result of continuous improvement and adjustment of lessons learned from previous interventions.

The UNDP has a long experience of direct work with communities at grassroots level combined with a long history of cooperation with Albanian central and local institutions. ESERE implementation mechanisms derive from experience and practice and the parallel active interaction of the Tirana-based coordination team and the day-to-day exchanges between the four Local Coordinators, placed in municipal buildings, together with the Community Exchange Workers have ensured a constant coordination with involved actors and a timely management of issues related to the implementation of activities.

ESERE will have exhausted all resources by the end of implementation, producing higher results than originally targeted. (Answer to Evaluation Question 2.5.)

87% (plus an additional 6% committed) of ESERE's budget had been disbursed by the end of December 2018 and the activity plan for the remaining period, i.e., until June 2019 is indicating that the entire budget - including the UNDP financial contribution will be exhausted.

The use of resources has allowed to reach ESERE targets for all activities and exceed foreseen results in the number of beneficiaries from the first project component on employment opportunities and professional skills upgrade.

ESERE resources have also triggered additional investments from the targeted municipalities with the financing of salaries of dozens of additional staff employed in the renovated or constructed community centers from its municipal budgets.

ESERE has promoted stakeholder ownership at municipal and national levels, formulating clear roles, responsibilities and expectations of key stakeholders. Stakeholder involvement has been strong, especially at the municipal level. (Answer to Evaluation Question 2.6.)

ESERE has been designed in such a way that activities are converted into effective results only if the key project parties played an active role in its design and implementation.

Interviews feedback has clearly confirmed reports that the various project interventions have been a multi-stakeholder decision and the result of a consultative process. This seems to have been the case across the four components: Small business owners have chosen the professional activities for which ESERE has provided support; graduated interns have been selected based on their skills. At the community level, Roma and Egyptian representatives have been the spokespersons of their peers to voice their priorities to municipal representatives in order to decide on priority Community Upgrading Projects. Social services employees have been trained and involved in the practices of concrete case management situation. Staff from the Ministry of Health and Social Protection have been coached and trained to implement and monitor the NAPIRE.

From community beneficiaries, to municipal employees, non-governmental organization to ECO-Tirana employees or ministerial staff, interviewees have repeatedly expressed their appreciation of being systematically invited to get involved the decision-making process of activities. Roma and Egyptian community members have been impressed to witness that the key concerns they had voiced were effectively implemented during the project timeframe.

The ESERE team efforts to involve the project partners have been rewarded, in return, by the high level of participation, which is expected to continue in various forms as community continue to meet and discussion their priorities on a regular basis.

Roma and Egyptians CSOs have however expressed concerns over the fact that without further funding, they will not have alternative resources to continue facilitating the consultative processes with community members. This situation is raising the question of the extent to which the mainstreaming of social funds will be effective in taking over the cost of the multiple actions that make the social inclusion of Roma and Egyptian an effective process.

The project has produced comprehensive and timely reporting while maintain an open communication with its partners. (Answer to Evaluation Question 2.7.)

The evaluation has found the level of reporting on ESERE activities satisfactory, combining regular internal reporting and detailed as well as comprehensive accounts on implementation progress in the ESERE annual reports. The project steering committee meetings have been regular enough to take actions when necessary. But, most importantly, the daily interaction within the ESERE team and the active and open communication maintained with project partners have helped feeding reports while keeping key stakeholders up to date, including through the several communication events organized by the project.

ESERE has delivered more activities and results than originally planned, while mobilizing some municipal contributions. (Answer to Evaluation Question 2.8.)

ESERE has delivered activities as per the plan but in higher numbers and with higher results in terms of beneficiaries of the employment work package. From an elevated perspective, ESERE has shaped the contours of an effective model for Roma and Egyptian inclusion.

Indeed, besides the positive outcome of assisting more beneficiaries than initially targeted, ESERE has demonstrated the validity of its approach, changing the paradigm of Roma and Egyptian exclusion as a fatality to inclusion as a reality.

The project has delivered a series of activities that were additional to what was initially foreseen, but two components can be taken as crucial good examples in this regards: the full support of the ESERE project in the situation of the Roma eviction families in Tirana in June 2019 and the conceptualization of the Transitory Programme for Roma and Egyptians Recyclers in collaboration with Tirana Municipality and Eco Tirana which was additional to what initially foreseen.

If ESERE has only mobilized modest additional resources for the project, it has triggered additional municipal resources, but yet more contribution seems necessary from the Albanian government.

The Municipality of Durrës has made a direct contribution of 150,000 Euros to ESERE activities, but ESERE activities have raised municipalities' awareness and commitment to address the needs of Roma and Egyptians with increased financial commitments, in the forms of additional community centers staff or supporting cultural events organized by the communities. Nonetheless, the cost of integration remains largely underfunded and centrally available social funds seems either to fail reaching the local level or addressing the priorities as expressed by municipalities itself. In addition, there are not available targeted interventions similar to ESERE with a community based integrated approach.

4.3. EFFECTIVENESS

Based on activity reports and accounts from interviews, all activities will have been achieved by the end of the (extended) project timeframe. (Answer to Evaluation Question 3.1.)

At the time of evaluation, the majority of ESERE activities had already been completed with the remaining period until the end of June 2019, estimated to provide sufficient time to complete all of the planned actions in a timely manner. A six-month no-cost extension had been granted at the end of 2018 in order to provide sufficient time for some infrastructure activities to be completed.

The timely delivery of activities requiring the coordinated involvement of multiple actors is a clear indicator of effective delivery mechanisms supported by a close level of management. (Answer to Evaluation Question 3.2.)

ESERE is rich in substance with nineteen activities gathered around four strategic components that are very different in nature, involving numerous actors in a national and four local contexts. This makes ESERE a complex project to implement that requires a well-articulated delivery mechanism.

This mechanism is primarily the result of previous interventions which modalities have improved with experience over time. The project document provides a detailed explanation of the thorough background analysis work (legal/policy analysis, stakeholder mandates, capacity gap analysis, analysis of social exclusion factors, communities social development indicators...) that has been performed prior to the start of the project and which has provided the basis for developing the project approach and implementation modalities.

Outreach to communities and to institutions has been the driving force of ESERE and the targeted communities have enjoyed an unprecedented access to inclusion services. (Answer to Evaluation Question 3.3.)

It is difficult to envisage a more direct access to communities than the channels ESERE has opened for the communities and with a wide panel of stakeholders. With 50% of its staff from the Roma and Egyptian communities, the project has showed a clear intention of getting a direct role in bridging the divide between communities and public services. ESERE personnel have taken social service staff to the field to address community issues. Municipal, employment office and other employees have been invited to roundtable to solve community priorities. Community center have been physically established close to where Roma and Egyptian families reside. Community NGOs have been invited to help community consult about and voice their concerns to the relevant institutions, access to project services, outreach to communities and bringing user and services providers to interact directly.

The issue of the public perception of Community Centers in relation to the specific population groups these centers are serving, has been evoked during a field visit.

The Community Centre in Berat was established with funds of the previous programme SSIREC, while during the ESERE implementation the model of social services was built. The initial challenge of the Centre, which was duly identified by the project and partners, was the risk that the Community Centre could be perceived by the majority of the inhabitants of the region as exclusively designed to serve the Roma and Egyptian communities. Indeed, the intervention implemented by Partnere per Femijet NGO kept this risk in mind since the start of implementation, with the final aim to reduce the risk of segregation and make the Centre attractive to the whole population transversally. Indeed, the staff of the Center was trained and coached to work in the field by mobilizing non-Roma families approach the center and enjoy its services including the kindergarten ones. As from an attentive analysis of the reporting of Partnere per Femijet NGO, it can convincingly be affirmed that there has been registered a transformation with respect to the starting point: the figures of the majority of population accessing the Community Centre have progressively increased, thus showing reduction of the positive discrimination.

Notwithstanding the above, as the risk of segregation continues to be notable, ESERE staff seems conscious on the matter, and ready to apply mitigation measures for the Centre to be a welcoming space for the entire population.

ESERE has adjusted timely to the multi-dimensional changes of social inclusion context and has also been a factor of positive change. (Answer to Evaluation Question 3.4.)

ESERE has been active on multiple frontlines; those of the daily difficulties faced by communities, those of municipal policies and actions in favour of inclusion, as well as the policy and ministerial decisions. As such, any change during the life of the project has been directly received by ESERE, its team and partners. Thanks to this direct contact with the various dimensions the social inclusion context, the project has demonstrated a capacity to capture and react promptly to changes. Actually, more than just adjusting to changes, ESERE has also been a factor of changes. The project team has done so by multiplying negotiations and lobbying actions with ministries or municipalities to get more commitment, with, for instance, getting social or employment civil servants paying field household visits more frequently in the Roma and Egyptian communities.

Thus, the presence of ESERE on the several fronts of social inclusion has actually led the project to become an actor, rather than just a follower of change.

Direct beneficiary interviews have indicated a strong level of satisfaction about the services rendered by ESERE but also about how their situations have been addressed. (Answer to Evaluation Question 3.5.)

Over 80 Roma and Egyptian male and female individual ESERE beneficiaries - most of them from the Work Package 1 and 2 (Professional skills, small grants, vocational training etc.) - have been interviewed. Community centers but also schools and CSO premises busy with various adult literacy classes or other activities have been visited by the team of evaluators. All have firmly expressed great satisfaction about the drastic changes in their lives as a result of the project intervention. But they have largely acknowledged that the ESERE project team has contributed to changing the attitude employees of social services or employment offices have towards Roma and Egyptian communities. Indeed, ESERE has initiated a change of paradigm, both in the way institutions consider their role and approach towards Roma and Egyptian communities, but also on the perception of those communities towards institutions.

However, the needs of Roma and Egyptian remains high and the change of institutional performance must be sustained.

The field visit to Roma and Egyptian communities and the testimonies of the nature of the daily barrier sits members are dealing are a strong indication that their priorities are high. To the say of interviewees, ESERE has been the most significant contribution ever experienced in the improvement of their living conditions.

With the end of ESERE, the further involvement of the CSO activities that have played a crucial in empowering the communities remains a question mark as there are currently no other funding opportunities available. If the Roma and Egyptian civil society remain very committed, the level of their engagement will drastically reduce without the means to mobilize staff and conduct activities with the communities. The NGO Romani Baxt is a good example of this situation. The association plays a fundamental role in ensuring children from the local Roma communities remain within the formal (and preparatory) educational system. However, without resources, they cannot pay the team who accomplish the job on a daily basis. There are similar examples in each of the work-packages and single activities of the project.

ESERE activities will have been fully implemented by the project's end and all objectives will have been achieved. (Answer to Evaluation Question 3.6.)

As explained in previous sections, most activities have been completed and there are no foreseen obstacles to the completion of all activities by the project's end.

ESERE is the most significant contribution to Roma and Egyptians social inclusion...as well as to the contribution of the realization of NAPIRE's objectives. (Answer to Evaluation Question 3.7.)

The National Action Plan for the integration of Roma and Egyptians is the central effort of the Government of Albania to improve the living conditions of these communities and support their integration. Comparing NAPIRE and ESERE achievements gives an idea of the extent of the project's contribution to the national effort's objectives. All stakeholders interviewed has

praised ESERE's results as well as the change the project has induced in how the integration effort of Roma and Egyptian is now addressed in Albania.

Taking a look at the wider picture of integration needs of both communities in Albania leads to the following question: How much of the entire Roma and Egyptian population exclusion-related needs has ESERE addressed, when the estimates of their population size varies on a scale from one to ten?

So much about communities, but what about institutional resources, capacities and readiness to fully implement the implementation proposed by ESERE? The testimonies of municipality officials, public service civil servants are unequivocal: they are convinced of the relevance of the approach, more confident about their capacities. However, they have repeatedly asked for more assistance in managing better the size of the integration challenge.

No major factor has hindered ESERE's implementation besides the challenges clearly identified in the project design. (Answer to Evaluation Question 3.8.)

ESERE has not experienced any major capacitive or hindering factors during implementation, obviously besides the psychological barrier, requiring a patient, daily effort of awareness raising and mentality change.

Another obstacle, as high as it is beyond the project's influence is the slow, ineffective (fiscal) decentralization and slow involvement of central government in the implementation of Roma and Egyptian inclusion which has limited opportunities for a stronger multiplier-effect in terms of mobilizing public funds.

ESERE has been more than a contribution to the implementation of NAPIRE, it has also built a model. (Answer to Evaluation Question 3.9.)

The high share of ESERE indirectly conveys a message that the pro-active role and financial investment of the central government is yet to impress. Municipalities have demonstrated a strong willingness than an active involvement to ESERE's activities and concrete commitment through budget allocations but without substantial ministerial support, it is insufficient to

address all the challenges in the field, especially in terms of better housing for the targeted communities.

4.4. IMPACT

ESERE has produced multiple direct and indirect impacts, all positive. (Answer to Evaluation Question 4.1.)

The direct impacts on the communities are numerous. If taking the example of following the life cycle of a Roma or Egyptian child, the range of ESERE impacts could be summarized like this.

- ✓ Infant age: Better nutrition at the community center. Birth registration. Protection from potential domestic violence thanks to social workers monitoring. Better health through medical checks at the community center.
- ✓ Young age: Early educational exclusion owing to CSO/Community Centres close follow-up and attending pre-school classes. Prevention of language-based exclusion thanks to an early practice of the Albanian language.
- ✓ Teenage: Prevention of exploitation and trafficking thanks to joint ESERE staff, civil society and social services individual case management. Prevention of drop out from school. Early detection of future professional failure, thanks to counselling and orientation between higher studies or chosen vocational training.
- ✓ Adult age: For women: Prevention of domestic violence through social worker counselling. Prevention of extreme exclusion through adult literacy classes, strengthening of self-confidence through participation to various cultural and professional activities. Civil status registration, health card issuance bringing inclusion to the health care system. Reduction of poverty through professional upgrading schemes. Prevention of re-exclusion through complementary support services such as child guardianship.
- ✓ Elder age: Prevention of health deterioration through medical follow-up and prevention from isolation through socializing activities.

The above is a very brief summary of the impacts and does not include the myriad of situations of further exclusion avoided through an increased social care of the Roma and Egyptian communities.

ESERE has also produced a strong impact that could be situated between a direct and indirect results of the intervention: A change of minds and a change of paradigm.

The other key impact - besides improving the lives of assisted Roma and Egyptian communities - is the change of minds of “all involved parties”.

- ✓ Roma and Egyptian communities have a different stand towards public institutions and a faith in the social inclusion system. Communities have witnessed the concrete actions of municipal authorities and public civil servants, but they have also captured the willingness to support from actors they would previously felt ignored by. A very strong illustration of this change is summarized by the following situation. *A Roma woman who is now a regular user of the local community center and who occasionally visit the remote employment office in Durrës has admitted that before ESERE, she did not even know where the office was located”.*
- ✓ Municipal authorities have become pro-active in solving the multiple integration obstacles of the communities. The four municipalities engaged have supported financial several activities from their budgets but have also hired staff permanently in the social services section to assist Roma and Egyptian population. Most importantly, local governments have understood their responsibilities and are asking for more capacity to assist social inclusion.
- ✓ The Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, the Ministry of Education have demonstrated a genuine intention and strong commitment to support the inclusion process at its level. The allocation of adequate funds is yet awaited.

ESERE has made key stakeholders change their mindsets and collaborate closer than ever before. Together with the relevant multi-level integrated approach and mentality transformation, the evaluation has found that the project has largely contributed to a change of paradigm when it comes to Roma and Egyptian communities’ integration in Albania.

ESERE produced a considerable impact in terms of public communication, improving the public perception on Roma and Egyptian issues, but also enhancing the visibility of the donors on the good work conducted. Evidence shows that ESERE has organised high profile events with major media impact as witnessed by over 100 TV reportages and newspaper articles including in main national coverage media outlets. Social media and online communication channels have also been extensively deployed, thus bringing the issues closer to the wide public and multiplying the distribution through shares. A series of documentaries called Roma Stories have brought to the attention of the public the human stories of the members of the community in a positive and encouraging light. Particularly, international days have been used to raise public awareness on R&E issues, such as International Roma Day on 8th April, but also National Egyptian Day set on 24th June. Interviewees coincide that ESERE has made a shift in the perception of R&E issues in Albania and contributed in enhancing the good reputation of EU and UNDP in delivering and managing funds for Roma and Egyptian in the country.

ESERE's results have produced essentially positive and promising impacts, including changes in key stakeholders' attitudes, behaviors and delivery of services. (Answer to Evaluation Question 4.2.)

As explained in the previous paragraphs, ESERE has produced multiple impacts; often invisible but invaluable effects (municipal investment, communities and public services mind changes...).

ESERE has produced an effective model for the social inclusion Roma and Egyptian communities... replicable in other municipalities, possibly extendable to other Western Balkans countries...and ultimately relevant to social inclusion at large. (Answer to Evaluation Question 4.3.)

ESERE has produced an effective, successful model of social inclusion for Roma and Egyptian communities and...potentially a mainstream social inclusiveness as a model of all marginalized communities. (Integrated, 3D approach). The ESERE model is potentially both “upscale-able” across Albania and replicable in other Western Balkan Countries.

ESERE has achieved to multiplying its impact of Albanian institutions monitoring capacity by reviving the use and utilization of ROMALB and putting back monitoring as a central function in the Roma and Egyptian social inclusion set-up. The monitoring of ESERE and NAPIRE implementation has been crucial but measuring ESERE results in relation to overall Roma and Egyptian population size and has become the next priority in the years to come to continue monitoring progress on a social inclusion challenge that is still far to be entirely solved.

ROMALB has proven to be an effective monitoring tool and brings the potential to use accurate data to set policies and programmatic priorities.

ESERE is synonym to effective, tangible, durable changes... that however requires further and continued consolidation. (Answer to Evaluation Question 4.4.)

As explained into more details across the impact section of this report, the results of ESERE are strong, tangible, and multi-dimensional. However, ESERE has been and remains the central effort supporting the integration of Roma and Egyptian communities in Albania.

When ESERE ends, the project dynamic, its team and unique competences, its resources are not yet likely to be fully taken over by the institutions. Institutions are not yet prepared to play their role in the R&E inclusion and a follow-up targeted project seems necessary.

All civil servants engaged in the field work with the targeted communities have asked for additional practice support. Moreover, there are still high integration obstacles that remain largely unattended, such as the provision of better housing solutions. Hopefully, not just embellished similar lodging but a truly inclusive approach for housing, proposing for community members to move away from their ghetto and settle in modern social housing units.

Though this is beyond the control of the project, it is relevant to mention that the ineffective implementation of the decentralization of social funds aimed at enhancing social inclusion - among other priorities - can be considered as a missed opportunity from Albanian authorities to support the Roma and Egyptian specific local priority needs highlighted both by municipalities and ESERE.

ESERE's main change has been realised through modelling social inclusion involving a transformation of stakeholder's understanding, attitudes and practices in service delivery: an effective change of paradigm. (Answer to Evaluation Question 4.5.)

As highlighted in several instances of this report, ESERE has changed Municipalities and public services minds, consideration of Roma and Egyptian communities and an increase awareness what its role and duties. Municipalities have now become institutional advocates of Roma and Egyptian social inclusion.

ESERE has also empowered Roma and Egyptian communities, with the involvement of CSOs to advocate for their rights. The evaluation has found the level of awareness and empowerment has brought new capacities within the communities and its civil society. However, the current situation remains fragile, mainly because of the lack of resources and alternatives yet for CSO to mobilize funding beside ESERE.

UNDP's added-value is multiple: Mandate, Expertise, Grassroot level practice, Strongly appropriate project staff and trust from stakeholders. (Answer to Evaluation Question 4.6.)

UNDP's first added-value to ESERE is its staff who gathers a rare combination of personal life experience (from the assisted communities), long-term grassroot commitment, unique exposure to and understanding of the field realities, both institutional and social.

The agency has accumulated a long and unique experience and understanding of Roma and Egyptian inclusion stakes because of its central role, combining grassroot intervention, policy support and institutional empowerment of local governments.

UNDP is a legitimate, expert actor: it's a long-term government interlocutor and has been involved in connected efforts (employment, sustainable development, support to policy reforms...). UNDP is positioned as a unique Agency able to interconnect policy level with the community level, producing more impact due to sound and efficient management of large funds that no other entities could similarly handle. In addition, the position and legacy of UNDP allows a high level of interaction with the government which pushes forward large-scale repercussions and long term/sustainable impact.

4.5. SUSTAINABILITY

Most beneficiaries from the professional activities are likely to continue their commitment/activities. (Answer to Evaluation Question 5.1.)

The results of the first Work Package aiming at increasing employment and skills development opportunities have produced strong results and substantial sustainability perspectives with variations among the various employment package activities.

The professional profiling of Roma and Egyptian women and men has indicated a genuine intention of tailoring employability service on the basis of assessed individual capacities, situations and intentions. Overall, all the beneficiaries under this project component have performed very well. All of the visited small businesses run by beneficiaries - if not the great majority of ESERE beneficiaries according to reports have been performing strongly and have established stable activities. The job placements have provided opportunities for young Roma and Egyptian to build valuable professional skills. One young Roma employed at a marketing small company has come a long way from getting to respect working hours to build skills and earn additional responsibilities. This young male is now hired full time in the company and envisions in the longer-term to establish his own business.

Other successful examples include small family businesses which were about to fail and re-flourished thanks to project support; or initiatives that increased their profits to the point of expanding into new business outlets. These are examples where ESERE functioned as a triggering element for initiatives that were already in place and needed a boost. Other types of initiatives started from scratch and developed into successful stories, with concrete plans to expand further. All of the interviewed stakeholders under the small business component has more or less concrete plans and wishes to expand their activities.

Internships placement seem to have been less successful at a first look, with only eight out of 40 interns who have been kept by employer at the end of the internship. However, this number should not be interpreted as a poor performance. On the contrary, most the other 23 interns have gained from that experience. Some have left internships for better perspectives, including some who have been hired by other companies or others who have been accepted by universities to continue their studies.

ESERE has already achieved a strong degree of institutionalisation and the model can be made sustainable with further consolidation support. (Answer to Evaluation Question 5.2.)

Most of the practices introduced by ESERE have been adopted as regular practices of public services, including social services and employment offices.

The project has produced a series of structural results which will remain in place after the project termination. Most of these results are at policy level including institutional orders and decisions that have re-shaped the Albanian system in their spheres of action. More concretely, one of the most important lasting results has been the issuance of Order no .576, dated 16.12.2017 of the Ministry of Health and Social Protection for the referral system and free primary public health services.

ESERE and UNDP staff have strongly lobbied for the inclusion of all the categories of people in need in access to health system. In substance, the Order released the burden of being registered as unemployed person for having access to primary health services. In this way, categories in need are not necessarily obliged to be registered as unemployed at the respective employment offices for them to have free access to the health system. This is considered by the interviewees a major achievement of the project that will continue to have an indefinite impact in the future.

Furthermore, another important development triggered by the project is the Order no 276. dated 30.12.2016 of the Ministry of Health and Social Protection on the functioning of the ROMALB system. This order makes official the ROMALB tool within the Albanian institutional system. A crucial achievement is the Order of the Minister of Education and Sports on provision of free text books for Egyptian primary school pupils achieved as a result of the advocacy efforts of the project. It leads to the inclusion of the Egyptian community and prevents discriminatory treatment.

The Order of the Minister of Education, Sports and Youth on adult education entailing an agreement with schools about welcoming adult classes has been amended reflecting the recommendations for improvement submitted by ESERE project.

The elements that the new document included aimed at improving a series of aspects that ESERE has considered lessons learnt during its implementation regarding new procedures for the registration and for the class attendance.

Overall, most of the practices developed by ESERE have been warmly welcomed and adopted by local institutions. Memorandum of understanding with line ministries, in support of measures facilitating the inclusion of Roma and Egyptian have been signed. The endorsement of the Minister of Education, Sports and Youth on institutionalization of Basic Literacy and Life Skills courses is an illustration of actions of the project which have been incorporated in the system and will continue after the project ending.

A good achievement of sustainability is the agreement in Berat Municipality for disadvantaged children to be exempted from fees in public kindergartens through the Decision No. 44 dated 26.04.2018 of Berat Council of Municipality to subsidize the fee for Roma and Egyptian children among other groups.

In terms of local planning, the four cities covered by the project - Tirana, Shkodra, Durrës and Berat - have approved the Local Development Plan for the Roma and Egyptian Communities through a Municipal Council Decision. Although the concrete results of the implementation of the action plans remain to be evaluated in the future, this step seems important in terms of political commitment of the local government units towards the Roma and Egyptian population.

In the series of results that will definitely continue to have an impact after the project termination, it is to be mentioned the formalization of community based social services through Order no. 911, date 27.12.2018 on the approval of the standards for the social care service delivery in multidisciplinary community centres as per the ESERE created model.

However, all these achievements towards an institutionalization of practices are fairly recent as they have happened during the project cycle. The majority of interviewed stakeholders have expressed the need for consolidation, for the further practice and training on how to make services more performing in serving the needs of the targeted communities. A number of essential activities will be sustained, but not all activities, especially those implemented by Roma and Egyptians CSOs.

One of the major sustainable results of the project is also related to inclusion of social services staff in the payroll of the Municipalities. ESERE project reportedly put a lot of efforts through intense advocacy actions at several institutional levels in order to commit the Municipalities to introduce social staff in their Municipal structures. This is a major achievement of the project, in an area where social contribution had been very limited. It is an engagement of the Municipalities in financial terms, but it also affects the municipal agenda by re-directing/shaping the way of setting local priorities and allocating municipal funding.

In addition, more at a policy level, the recently approved secondary legislation on social services finds a preliminary model of implementation in the practice that ESERE has built under the present project. This is of paramount impact in a context where good legislation is binding, but its practical implementation remains reportedly problematic. ESERE has contributed to build a practice for the by-law's implementation at an early stage in the targeted areas. Nevertheless, even though community services and practices have been modeled/institutionalized, additional capacities of service providers and accompaniment of the inclusion process is needed.

Municipal authorities have the will to continue to use established mechanisms though they lack the resources. (Answer to Evaluation Question 5.3.)

The new Law on Social Protection has been recently approved with subsequent by-laws that make it viable legislation. The social services that are to be delivered and executed at local level are basically foreseen in the by-laws. The services delivered at Municipal level in the framework of the ESERE project have prepared terrain for the implementation of the law, tested and put in practice a model of social services that the Municipalities should themselves take over. This setting of mechanism by practice seems an example of sustainability that will remain beyond the project implementation. In additional cases, Municipalities have contributed with staff paid by their own budget for the Community Centres.

The capacity of municipalities to continuation deliver services is altered by the poor implementation of several sectoral reforms by the central government, especially the allocations of funds that are expected to accompany the transfer of wider responsibilities over enlarged territorial responsibilities.

ESERE has put the appropriate social inclusion mechanisms in place, sustainable in design and practice but in need of further accompaniment and additional resources. (Answer to Evaluation Question 5.4.)

With ESERE, UNDP has helped establish a model which mechanisms are ensuring the social inclusion of Roma and Egyptian communities and that is likely to become a sustainable process in Albania. However, if sustainability has been achieved in the design, the consolidation of the ESERE model is a pre-requisite and continued EU funding support for a future consolidation phase is a priority.

In the meantime, the ESERE model as it is today is in need of consolidation. The new practices in public service delivery, in multi-stakeholders devised solutions have convinced the community and the key stakeholders and most of these practices have already been institutionalized. However, the promoted approach is still relatively new, especially to institutions, and the project cycle format is a short period in comparison to the longer-term nature of the changes sought. Social services and employment office employees need more practice and more expert mentorship from ESERE staff to become fully effective in their new roles. Getting the central government to further fulfil its responsibilities towards Roma and Egyptian integration, especially via an effective budgetary decentralization is the next number one challenge for the consolidation of a sustainable institutional social inclusion setup.

ESERE has produced multiple best practices, all driven by a more coherent social inclusion set-up and resulting in improved service delivery. (Answer to Evaluation Question 5.5.)

A number of best practices have emerged from ESERE implementation; especially since the project has promoted the development of a model. The practices related to this model are described under the section 5.2 Best Practices.

ESERE has an exit strategy, however, the model introduced needs to be consolidated before exiting of a project-based intervention. (Answer to Evaluation Question 5.6.)

ESERE has developed a vision, along with an exit strategy. However, the insufficient engagement of the central government renders existing a risky and premature move.

4.6. GENDER EQUALITY

Gender has been effectively integrated in the design and addressed as a priority during implementation. (Answer to Evaluation Question 6.1.).

The social inclusion of Roma and Egyptian cannot be achieved without addressing gender equality. The evaluation has found ESERE has directly contributed to advancing the situations of female beneficiaries through a wide spectrum of integrated and complementary activities, ranging from literacy courses, inclusive education, vocational training or professional upgrading solutions.

ESERE's project document is making clear references to gender equality in its principles but also in the proposed activities. ESERE directly supports the implementation of NAPIRE, which itself have established specific targets related to gender equality within the targeted communities. ESERE also indirectly supports the objectives of the National Action Plan for Gender Equality (2016-2020) of Albania.

In terms of implementation, ESERE has drafted a list of activities associated with specific results for Roma and Egyptian girls and women. In terms of monitoring, the project has developed gender disaggregated targets allowing to monitor progress and measure the realization of defined targets. All gender-specific targets have been reached.

The gender-specific activities have been tailored based on the social inclusion obstacles and challenges girls and women are experiencing. This ranges from addressing mother guardianship services provided to women to giving specific attention to female applicants to small business grants.

ESERE is aligned to key national, European and global gender equality principles as well as relevant strategies and programmes. (Answer to Evaluation Question 6.2.)

ESERE features clear references to universal gender equality principles in its project document.

Its objectives are supportive of EU integration prerequisites for the Western Balkan, and, as mentioned in the previous paragraphs, the gender-equality related activities of the project are also supporting the strategy and National Action Plan for Gender Equality of Albania.

ESERE provides multiple benefits to women and girls as it has addressed social inclusion challenges that are specific to these target sub-groups. (Answer to Evaluation Question 6.3.)

The project has established specific targets for the proportion of women beneficiaries from ESERE services as well specific activities contributing to gender equality. The thresholds established as equitable with 50% of women in most activities and realistic (closer to 30%) taking into consideration the conservative mentalities and the sociologic reality of the communities, (for instance, the target for youth activism initiatives led by young women has been set at 30%, reflecting the education level or the difficult access of women to such independent activities).

4.7. HUMAN RIGHTS

The human right dimension is concretely addressed through each of the project components. (Answer to Evaluation Question 7.1.)

The project's integration of the human rights dimension has been coherent with the way ESERE has applied gender equality principles and implemented activities targeted at tackling the profound issue of discrimination against Roma and Egyptians in the country.

The project entirely mainstreams a human rights-based approach that struggles to eradicate discrimination and bring dignity and entitlement to excluded communities. This mindset is also important because it sets the path for State institutions to see the R&E problems also under the loop of human rights entitlement.

ESERE has fully integrated human rights in its design and implementation. (Answer to Evaluation Question 7.2.)

The project has addressed the specific human-rights/discrimination related exclusion challenges experienced by the Roma and Egyptian community via the discrimination challenges experienced when integrating schools, looking for employment, or when celebrating its own culture. In that respect for instance, the various municipalities had decided to fund various cultural events organized by the local Roma communities. Several Community Counselling Forums have also organized local initiatives related to the promotion of human rights.

The ESERE team and project partners have experienced human-rights related challenges, however, all being anticipated in principle, owing to the nature of the intervention. (Answer to Evaluation Question 7.3.)

By addressing concrete cases of social exclusion, the project team and its partners have been confronted with regular situations of concerns affecting the human rights of the assisted communities. This has included a great variety of situations, from collaboration with institutions to support the integration of young children and their parents to literacy classes at school or counselling women victims of domestic violence. Such situations are unfortunate examples of human rights concerns; however, these issues belong to situations often faced by the Roma and Egyptian communities and had been clearly anticipated adequately and addressed by ESERE. The grassroot level intervention of the project has shed light on, but also provided concrete responses to human rights offences faced by the communities in focus at various levels.

5. LESSONS LEARNED AND BEST PRACTICES

5.1. LESSONS LEARNED

Here is a brief summary list of important lessons identified by the evaluation:

- Municipalities and public services employees have learned more than just new knowledge. They have developed new practices, attitudes and purpose in their work.
- The set of ESERE activities and the proposed integrated approach has led to the production of a model: It is the combination of background, experience and expertise of ESERE staff that enable to turn an appropriate model into a functioning system that delivers results. is unique and cannot be replaced.
- The slow implementation of the territorial reform (social needs far exceeding local resources, social funds not effectively disbursed, or priorities not funded) is impeding the further progress of Roma and Egyptian inclusion.
- The interrelated sectoral policies (women employment, social entrepreneurship, vocational training, housing...) are insufficiently connected.
- Central governments/ministries, regional levels provide limited guidance on Case Management to the local level. Additionally, there is no dedicated structure for Roma and Egyptian at central level or assigned staff on R & E issues at ministerial level.

5.2. BEST PRACTICES

1. The key best practice emerging from ESERE is that the project is much more than the **addition of its activities**, it is more than a project, well adjusted to Roma and Egyptian social inclusion challenges. ESERE has shaped a strong model, that still requires adequate resources for its implementation, to address nation-wide the long unresolved challenge of durable integration of the most excluded communities. As such, it can be seen as the culmination of a long effort of consecutives projects, finally about to offer a durable inclusion model that still needs to be sustained.

2. Taking a close look at the ESERE model is necessary to understand the (following) combination of reasons for its success:

- Introduction of the integrated approach
- Introduction of the vertical - policy level and community based - approach
- Change of attitude and commitment of Municipalities/local level institutions
- Regained sense of initiative of the R&E communities
- Multi-actor participatory approach
- Systematic and results-driven monitoring
- Producing strong success cases of durable and exemplary integration is crucial (to raising awareness and getting wide acceptance as well as getting more government actions).
- Tailored employment solutions are a best practice: there is no real, stable and durable inclusion without a decent employment at the centre.

3. The crucial role of human resources in the success of ESERE

ESERE staff features a unique combination of relevant background, experience and expertise of that cannot be replaced and must be involved in the consolidation of the R&E inclusion model.

The lesson learned in relation to human resources is that a few key principles need to be applied when making the key decision of hiring staff for projects:

- ✓ Social inclusion is often a vocation, a demanding task that requires years of engagement.
- ✓ Belonging or enjoying strong links with the targeted communities is essential to understand the nuance of integration challenges, build trust but also advocate for those communities' rights and entitlement.
- ✓ Being oneself an asserted personality who has built self-confidence over the experience of interacting with the difficult, sometimes dramatic social situations of the community members.
- ✓ Enjoy a solid education, be it a mix of informal experience and formal course in order to enjoy a high sense of awareness about public administration, the legal context and political challenges.

4. UNDP's comparative advantage in R&E projects

As confirmed by multiple interviewees, UNDP offers the following comparative advantages in implementing a similar project with respect to other entities present in the country:

- ✓ Full relevance with UNDP's mission in the country and other ongoing programmes on social inclusion,
- ✓ A strong reputation and stature in front of the government that allows to ask policy level interventions and sustainable changes. Excellent lobbying and advocacy power,
- ✓ Long-term partnerships built with several local/central institutions that allow the flow of relations and smooth implementation,
- ✓ Capacity to manage large funds while securing an efficient management (more results with the same resources) because of the economy of scale effect,
- ✓ Consolidated experience in similar R&E projects which allow to build upon past results and lessons learnt and capitalize on past impact.

5. A model built to secure national ownership and sustainability

ESERE was designed with the aim to reduce the level of dependence from international aid thus transferring structures and *know-how* to the central and local governments. The many examples of sustained actions, mainly represented by orders and decisions issued by the government as a result of the project, show that structural change has taken place and competences has been progressively transferred to the government. Nevertheless, by being the R&E challenges deeply rooted and widespread, it seems that this accompaniment process should continue in order to allow the government to reach a point of maturity and independency in the management of social inclusion models.

6. Risk analysis, mitigation measures and M&E

ESERE has been successful also because of the capacity to keep accountability high in the agenda and check risks periodically. Indeed, a thorough risk analysis has taken place every 6 months in the implementation of the project with due capitalisation of mitigation measures. A monitoring and evaluation system have been in place to inform the decision making and determine the pace of the project. The Project Management Committee composed also of several institutional representatives has been reportedly crucial for the smooth implementation of ESERE.

7. Employment is the top of the successful “social inclusion iceberg”.

Employment has a unique place in the sometimes very long and difficult path to getting socio-economically included. Getting and keeping a decent and stable employment situation often requires all of the other dimensions of insertion to be addressed prior or in parallel to getting a professional situation. In this respect, a decent job can be appreciated as the crown of all correlated social inclusion efforts. A qualified labour-active Roma is a key mindset change-maker as it showcases the tangible result of inclusion. The female Egyptian pizza owner downtown Tirana embodies this result. The tailored, capacity-based employment component of ESERE is a best practice in itself, for the quantitative and qualitative results achieved. The evaluation cannot insist enough on empowering individuals through quality employment, as these beneficiaries are the ambassadors of visible successful inclusion and the driving-force future.

8. Breaking the segregation model in the education system

Some initiatives of the ESERE project have contributed to breaking the segregation model that was progressively created in some schools throughout the country. This has been identified as a best practice also by representatives of the Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth.

9. Communication and media.

The success of ESERE in disseminating a different image of the Roma and Egyptian communities, but also of the model of successful EU/UNDP funded project itself has been highlighted by several actors. As interviewees confirm, ESERE impact in the media landscape has become even more crucial provided a past record of negative pre-conceptions that the Roma and Egyptian projects have had over the recent years. Through an intensive media campaign with more than 100 TV reportages and newspaper articles, ESERE has been consistent and impactful when it comes to fighting widespread discrimination and stigma on the Roma and Egyptian population. Through involving national well-known media outlets and high-level representatives (Ministers, EU and US Ambassadors, UN Representatives, ...) ESERE has boosted the issues covered at country level and kept the Roma and Egyptian challenges high in the national agenda on social inclusion. At the same time, interviewees coincide that the communication strategy has also produced a positive effect in terms of EU and UN donor visibility regarding the funds for Roma and Egyptian communities allocated for Albania.

6. CONCLUSIONS

1. Roma and Egyptian communities' social inclusion in Albania requires further project funding.

ESERE has shaped a strong model, but it needs further practice to be consolidated. The nation-wide cost of integration of the most excluded communities in Albania is still too high to be deprived of any international support (until the Government of Albania takes over). Though ESERE has produced a strong impact on R&E beneficiaries, their community -especially Roma - remains largely excluded and their needs high.

2. ESERE is not just a project, but embodies a model for R&E inclusion

The model is defined but needs further consolidation in the form of a further project phase.

3. The years of project support in favour of Roma and Egyptians inclusion should be considered as a social investment and, as in most cases, the benefits are substantial and durable only once the investment has been completed.

The evaluation considers that ESERE has produced the most significant results to date because lessons from past interventions have been learned. Not pursuing the effort poses the risk of losing on converting the capitalized experience from previous interventions into the “winning recipe” for sustainable Roma and Egyptian inclusion.

4. Roma are the most excluded and the inclusion effort of this community should be prioritized.

The Roma Regional Survey and the majority of interviewees engaged in the sector have confirmed that Roma are having a harder challenge to integrate the Albanian society. In brief, the exclusion gap between Egyptians and majority population Albanians is shrinking while it is increasing between Roma and Egyptians. All key important indicators, together with a language, cultural and geographical segregation of Roma populations tend to show that the gap between both targeted communities is not small. At a time, when financial resources are already scarce, prioritizing the allocation of funds is becoming a higher necessity. Obviously, the basis for prioritizing assistance should not be discriminatory and strictly- dedicated to a single community. Indeed, acute socio-economic exclusion is more concentrated in communities with low social diversity and elevated poverty indicators and physically existing

as settlements located outside urban centers, with very limited access to basic public services, poor infrastructure and lodging; or so-called “ghettos”.

5.The impact of ESERE and NAPIRE on the overall R&E community will be hard to measure as long as the population sizes of these groups are not measured effectively.

Thanks to ROMALB and the close monitoring of both ESERE and NAPIRE results, it is possible to measure the extent of the contribution of the project to the progress realized in the implementation of the Action Plan. However, the wider picture is missing. Given the amplitude of the variations among the various population estimation, it is not possible to assess the share of the Roma and Egyptian population assisted by ESERE. The reason for this is the absence of any reliable census of those communities in Albania. With the planned population census in Albania, there is an opportunity to ESERE to further contribute to an effective census of both marginalized communities, by involving the CSO and community leaders which capacities have been strengthened by the project by briefing the population census enumerators and help them in their field work.

6.The importance of and reliance on institutional processes.

The ESERE is relevant because it is highly inclusive and participatory. It is only effective when all involved stakeholders are willing and/or able to fulfil their obligations and one aspect of the complexity is the reliance of a social inclusion process on the effective implementation of the various decentralization reforms to grant power and release resources to finance that process. Indeed, the evaluation has identified this reliance of decentralized responsibility (to Municipalities) and funds as an increase challenge for the social inclusion of Roma and Egyptian communities, before any other community in Albania.

7.Strengthening Roma and Egyptian inclusion while modelling social inclusion in Albania.

Getting inspiration from a renown saying, it seems relevant to assert that “If ESERE can make it with Roma, ESERE can make it with any marginalized, vulnerable population”, given that it is the most excluded and vulnerable group in all aspects but also the most discriminated population. Given the degree of their exclusion and the level of their needs, the social inclusion of Roma and Egyptians needs to be further advanced and lobbied for. In parallel, the ESERE approach can be modeled to become adapted to a wider population of socially excluded in Albania.

8.(social) Housing needs of Roma - primarily and Egyptians remain largely unattended.

However, together with employment, solving housing of those communities is crucial as it is not just a factor but an accelerator of integration. Repeatedly during the field mission, ESERE beneficiaries, members of the (especially) Roma community have mentioned housing as a priority. Not just better housing, but housing in a better environment, with better and more accessible services. Along with decent employment, socially mixed housing promotes the visible side of positive social inclusion. Models of social housing experimented in Western European countries but also in the Western Balkans⁸ could offer solutions relevant to the context of Albania.

9.Measuring the Cost benefit of ESERE:

ESERE is a cost-effective model that requires awareness to appreciate the value of the model. ESERE is an effective, qualitative but also effective model. However, such models targeting deep-rooted transformative processes are exposed to one substantial risk: Being evaluated against the sole criteria of cost/beneficiary ratio.

It is first essential to look at the situation of Roma, to a lesser extent Egyptian community-its socio-economic indicators- in Albania to understand the size - and the cost -of empowering an institutional set up capable of taking a discriminated, uneducated individual out of poverty to a stable, sustained life. The cost per beneficiary ratio of ESERE has been elevated indeed because it has been about building an institutional set-up that is both effective and durable.

Much of the successes in the sectoral reforms Western Balkans countries are going through are the successes of completed transformative processes; and those are lengthy processes as they often are about changing mentalities, practices, institutional cultures etc. In this context, projects are considered effective and valuable if they produce durable results. ESERE has provided durable solutions for the beneficiaries it has directly assisted but also created a model that is transforming previous disconnected integration efforts into a coordinated and integrated model.

⁸In Serbia, EU-funded project promoting social housing models mixing IDP, the elderly and resident populations have been an important step to the social inclusion of the population displaced by the wars in Ex-Yugoslavia.

When attempting to compare ESERE to other interventions aiming at fundamental social transformations in the EU zone, there is no lack of examples illustrating the level of the financial, resource and time-effort that have been necessary to witness effective and durable social changes. For instance, solving the employment dimension of social exclusion in countries like Italy or Austria has involved often close to 10 years of continued EU interventions supporting the introduction of bottom-up innovative approaches⁹ to see tangible changes

⁹ Territorial Pacts owe their origins to a general shift of policy interest toward the exploration of local and bottom-up approaches to employment creation that took place during the middle 1990's. Territorial Employment Pact in the sector of employment or LEADER programmes in the field of rural development have been introduced and funded by the EU from the years 2000-on.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1. KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

⇒ **Key Recommendation 1: Develop a project proposal for a next ESERE phase and actively mobilize funds (with the EU).** Pursue to targeted effort of R&E inclusion: Fund Roma targeted project: Achieving Roma integration is much longer process than social inclusion. Because the Roma integration challenge is the highest, of ESERE has built a strong Social Inclusion model, but in practice the Roma integration model is not yet sufficiently anchored with municipalities & institutions, needs to scale up results, lobby more local and national governments so they fully take over their roles in implementation.

➔ **Specific recommendation 1.1: *Organise a workshop to take stock of all best practices and formulate a field experience-based model describing the complete mechanism of social inclusion of Roma and Egyptian communities.*** This will help capitalize on ESERE experience and also propose a “key-in-hands” product for more municipalities to engage in the social inclusion of those population groups.

➔ **Specific recommendation 1.2: *Include Roma and Egyptian communities from other municipalities with a view to replicate the model, while keeping as targeted locations the 4 existing Municipalities in order to bring the model at a more advanced stage and secure sustainability of results.*** More specifically, it is recommended to:

- Include new municipalities (limited number ranging from 2 to 4 depending on available resources) characterized by specific areas of acute Roma and Egyptian social exclusion with a focus on so-called “ghetto” and elevated poverty areas in the recommended following phase.
- Continue supporting ESERE in the current (4) targeted municipalities with a focus on mentorship of all actors (especially public services, civil society and the private sector) and on the specific aspects of social inclusion assessed as in priority need of support (accompaniment, grants to CSO...). Involved those 4 municipalities in the transfer of experience and knowledge (exchange visits, mentorship...) to newly targeted municipalities.

⇒ **Key Recommendation 2: Strengthen the Roma and Egyptian inclusion model and use this opportunity to provide a tested and strong model for mainstreamed social inclusion in Albania:** Use and extend the ESERE effective intervention to develop a model of inclusion that is not just relevant to Roma and Egyptian communities but also applicable to address inclusion of all excluded or marginalized communities in Albania (unique opportunity and practice, gives more sense to the social investment made by the EU).

➡ **Specific recommendation 2.1: Set the conditionality of recommended ESERE next phase social inclusion activities to the release of central government matching (social funds) contribution¹⁰:** Lobbying and conditionality to central government for further commitment to next phase (systematic contribution with social funds): Recognizing the heavy financial cost of Roma and Egyptian integration process to be borne by Municipalities - even more so with extended territorial responsibilities-and having identified the weak decentralization of (social) funds dedicated to this purpose, lobbying local and central government to implement fully their obligation is becoming an increasingly urgent task. By getting further municipal commitment towards inclusion, ESERE has demonstrated that international projects also provide a strong leverage to get more government commitment.

Following this observation, the evaluation recommends that a next ESERE phase factors an increased level of conditionality where, for instance, each project-funded intervention is conditioned to the line ministries and targeted municipalities release (social) funds that are commensurate to the needs. In order to secure institutional commitment, an agreement on the conditionality should be settled prior to the commencement of the project. This recommendation is relevant to the various ministries implementing related action plans (youth employment, social enterprise, inclusive education...). Consider analyzing the situation on financial decentralization to Municipalities.

¹⁰ Especially for employment generation activities such as small businesses, social enterprises...

- ➡ **Specific recommendation 2.2: Strengthen implementation practice:** More field practice of unified case management is needed: until a Roma is durably integrated, if not accompanied, it is a risk of being excluded again, at any time in the integration process. Roma community clearly needs further accompaniment in their process of gaining progressive independence and being self-sustained. The process of integration can suffer no disruption.
- ➡ **Specific recommendation 2.3: Package Case-management:** unify, harmonize and systemize integrating all practices and coordination of services.
- ➡ **Specific recommendation 2.4:** Build and promote stories of successful integration: Provide “Quality Job” solutions to qualified/educated R&E with potentials and make an impact on the public through promotion campaigns of such cases. Build successful model of integration to showcase role model and promotion. **If model is successful with Roma and Egyptian, it will be successful as a sectoral model for all socially excluded.**
- ➡ **Specific recommendation 2.5: “Break the ghetto”** Apply a more targeted approach by prioritizing support to the most excluded Roma and Egyptian communities, i.e., settlements physically isolated from urban centers (and characterized by poor housing).

7.2. ADDITIONAL SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

- Advocate with the government to take over the implementation of the NAPIRE, instead of just accompanying it in the implementation.
- Introduce an Inclusive Social Housing Model in Albania with facilitating criteria for the most vulnerable categories.
- **Further strengthen the employment component:** Consider grant schemes to Support the Social Enterprise model with high growth potential (Educated Roma) employed mixed communities. Lobby for the Government of Albania to provide incentives specifically for Social Enterprise integrating Roma and Egyptians (livelihood component).

- **Provide perspective of institutionalized** employment to ESERE Community Mediators, and other involved ESERE staff so as to preserve the relationship between the municipality and community.
- **Prioritize settlements with the attribute of ghettos** as those are priority locations in terms of social exclusion and need for assistance.
- Use ROMALB data for policy/Programme formulation & Advocacy (GoA accountability).
- Involve higher level managers of public institutions so as to get more understanding, support and buy-in so employees receive stronger support from their hierarchy in their work.

8. ANNEXES

8.1. MOST SIGNIFICANT SYSTEMIC AND CASE BASED STORIES

1. Housing support and integrated services for vulnerable families: Bregu i Lumit showcase

Bregu i Lumit is an area on the western edge of the capital. For nearly two decades, about 60 poor families from different parts of Albania, mostly of the Roma community, have built their lives in the Bregu i Lumit riverbank. Anyone who knows this area knows the problems and difficulties that residents face every day. One of them, Nazmije Ruzja, a mother of four, lived all her life in Bregu i Lumit. She lived in dwellings in very poor conditions, which suffered floods often when it rained. "When it rained, I was afraid to sleep," says Nazmije, "Water flooded everything and I should keep children safe." Children had difficulty going to school as the school was far behind and the future of the children concerned so much Nazmije. When she was contacted by the local staff of ESERE project and informed about the possibility of social housing, the steps and procedures needed to apply were determined to make every effort to ensure a better future for her children. Nazmije was assisted step by step by the Community Mediator and Local Project Coordinator ESERE who accompanied Nazmije to each office to provide documentation as well as mediated and contacted the Social Housing Department at the Municipality of Tirana to speed up the process. Since then, Nazmije lives in a new apartment at the social housing complex in Shkoza. Younger children, Adrian and Rozeta were supported with school registration and enrolled in a school near their home.

2. A New Multifunctional Community Center provides socially-integrated social services in the community

Residents of Shkodra, children and teachers, representatives of local government and donors inaugurated on October 18th, 2018 the Multifunctional Community Center for the Family.

The Multifunctional Community Center was identified as a priority by the community living in Shkodra and offers a wide range of social services for over a thousand families, including Roma and Egyptian ones.

Improving access to social services for Roma and Egyptian communities is at the core of the ESERE project interventions. Through the project, a new model for case management is provided through community-based social services such as psychological and legal counselling, medical assistance, education support, employment mediation and a range of

other social services to address multiple challenges faced by Roma and Egyptian minorities in order to further integrate them into society. About 1100 Roma and Egyptians enjoy better access to social services thanks to the implementation of this new service model.

3. Active Roma citizens and civil society: the case of olive trees planting in Berat

On February 1st, 2018, the community of Morava, men, women, and children living in the settlement of Osum, with the support of the civil society organization "Amaro Drom" gathered to plant in the riverbank around 700 olive tree roots. Planting and cultivating olive trees is a tradition of the Berat city. The families living in the area had additional reasons to join forces for this community action: the tree roots also protect the soil from erosion. Every year many families were losing their terrains because of the frequent floods and the riverbank erosion. The initiative was taken in the framework of the civil society grant scheme that ESERE has supported. The project is showcased not just for the practical benefits it entails through planting trees, but most importantly for the re-creation of a common social fabric in the community. This significant story is an example of the Roma community articulating its needs and coming together to sort them out with a spirit of community activism.

4. From victim of gender-based violence to civil society activist: the story of Orkida

Orkida's story is an example of how women get out of the violence chain and become factors of change for other members of the community. After a long story of violence, Orkida divorced her husband, and through difficulties decided to help those that suffer the same conditions as her through establishing the NGO "A roof for Roma women". The organization applies for the ESERE grants scheme and after being awarded a project starts the work for with literacy courses for women and girls, as well as awareness raising sessions on domestic violence. Orkida thinks that education is the key for empowerment of Roma women. She and her team are always present in the community to raise awareness of gender-based violence and the importance of women's rights.

8.2. TERMS OF REFERENCES

Final Evaluation of ESERE Project

Background

Although the Government of Albania has been successfully implementing important political, social and economic reforms, Roma and Egyptian face direct and indirect barriers in accessing public services, stemming from some eligibility criteria they cannot comply with, lack of information or understanding of administrative procedures, as well as stigma and frequent discriminatory attitude from the majority population. Long-term exclusion, treatment by the majority population and the relationship with government institutions has affected the living conditions of Roma and Egyptians. Studies show that the level of poverty among Roma is twice as high as the majority population. Regardless of their recognition as minority, Roma are both marginalized and socially excluded communities.

The *"Economic and Social Empowerment for Roma and Egyptians- a booster for social inclusion" (ESERE)* project is funded by the European Union and aims to further improve the social inclusion of most vulnerable communities consisting of Roma and Egyptians in Albania, with focus in the regions of Tirana, Durrës, Shkodra and Berat. The project's purpose is to promote the economic and social empowerment of Roma and Egyptian communities in Albania by standardizing an innovative and integrated new approach at the policy and programming level and to provide integrated social inclusion models at sub-national level focusing in the regions of Tirana, Durrës, Shkodra and Berat.

This will be achieved by facilitating the horizontal and vertical communication and cooperation of the different stakeholders, including the target groups, at the national and sub-national/local level and implementing innovative tools, new models in flagship initiatives for increasing employment and vocational training opportunities, improving access to basic social services, strengthening institutional capacity, and establishing supportive mechanisms for those who live under severe circumstances. In the long term, this aims to lift the Roma and Egyptian families out of poverty and support their sustainable inclusion in the Albanian society and labour market.

The project is composed based on four (4) project objectives formalized in four (4) work packages, introduced below.

Objective 1 - Increased employment and skills development opportunities accessed by Roma and Egyptian women and men reduce the employment gap between R&E communities and the majority of the population.

Objective 2 - Community Led Local Development (CLLD) for R&E inclusion at the local level through integrated, inclusive and sustainable development.

Objective 3 - Procedures, models, tools and guidelines established and made operational based on

the Integrated Approach and a Behavioural Change Model to support better access of Roma and Egyptian communities to basic equitable, inclusive and decentralised services and to foster a tolerant and inclusive society in Albania.

Objective 4 - The National Action Plan for Roma and Egyptian Integration in the Republic of Albania, 2015-2020, supported for implementation, monitoring and evaluation at the national, regional and local level.

All of the above will be supported by a comprehensive communication and visibility strategic plan. The methodology selected is based on hands-on support to active participation in community development activities and businesses required and selected by the beneficiaries. Through this methodology it has been calculated that the impact will be stronger and the interest of different stakeholders higher and more sustainable in the long term.

Duties and Responsibilities

The object of this evaluation is to analyse ESERE Project process of implementation, the impact and changes that have occurred within beneficiaries and systems, identify problems and constraints that have been encountered, identify important lessons to be learnt and make recommendations for the implementation of future projects.

The evaluation shall be based on the standard evaluation criteria including relevance, level of achievement of project objectives, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability (as defined by OECD), as well as human rights-based approach and results-based management (as applied by the UN). The evaluation aims at the followings:

1. Measure to what extent the ESERE project has fully implemented the activities, delivered outputs and attained outcomes and specifically measuring development results;
2. Generate substantive evidence based knowledge, by identifying best practices and lessons learned and make recommendations for improved future assistance in the relevant area.

More specifically the evaluation will:

1. Analyse the project's design quality and internal coherence (needs and problems it seeks to solve);
2. Analyse the sustainability of project interventions;
3. Provide feedback to the participating agencies and national counterparts on the soundness (defined as relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability) and impact of their approach in the project;
4. Evaluate project impact of implemented actions, contained in the Work Plans and Programme Logframe;
5. Ensure gender sensitive evaluation criteria is used and gender equality considerations are integrated in the evaluation.
6. Based on the analysis conducted over the experience of ESERE, extract general lessons

learned and recommendations for future interventions;

7. Provide the donor with information on impact of their specific support through the project, to social inclusion of Roma and Egyptian communities in Albania

The evaluation will also focus on how the human rights- based approach applied, has influenced the achievement of the outputs and outcomes and to provide recommendations for planning and formulation of the future replication of the project in other areas.

The conclusions and recommendations generated by this evaluation will be addressed to its main users, participating agencies: the Project Management Committee, EU Delegation to Albania and other partners involved in the project implementation.

The consultants will work under the direct supervision of UNDP ESERE Project Manager and in close cooperation with the project team based in Tirana, Durres, Shkodra and Berat.

EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

Evaluation methodology is framed around standard evaluation criteria (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability) plus two guiding principles for UN work (human rights based approach and results-based management).

The Evaluator will use methodologies and techniques as determined by the specific needs for information, the questions set out in the TOR, the availability of resources and the priorities of stakeholders. In all cases, the Evaluator is expected to analyse all relevant information sources, such as annual reports, programme documents, internal review reports, programme files, strategic country development documents and any other documents that may provide evidence on which to form opinions. The Evaluator is also expected to use interviews as a means to collect relevant data for the evaluation.

The methodology and techniques to be used in the evaluation should be described in detail in the inception report and the final evaluation report, and should contain, at a minimum, information on the instruments used for data collection and analysis, whether these be documents, interviews, field visits, questionnaires or participatory techniques.

The evaluation will follow the Standards and Norms of United Nations Evaluation Group, UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation, 2008, UNEG/FN/ETH (2008).

3. Description of Tasks and Responsibilities

Working under the supervision of the UNDP Project Manager (referred to as evaluation focal points), the International Evaluation Expert (team leader) will work jointly with a National Evaluation Expert (team member) and lead the performance of the following tasks:

- Carry out desk-top review of relevant documents and reports (project document, Annual Work Plans, Project Results Framework, Phasing out Matrix, Annual Progress Reports, and other related documents to be provided by the project team);
- Lead the preparation of the inception report, containing the evaluation methodology and tools as well as the detailed calendar of actions, elaborated in consultation with the evaluation focal

points;

- Lead the field work (survey/ interviewing process of data gathering) in the regions of Tirana, Berat, Durres and Shhkodra to conduct meetings and hold key interviews with stakeholders;
- Based on discussions and interviews, develop “Most Significant Systemic and Case Based Stories” of the project to be included as an annex in the evaluation report;
- Submit draft final evaluation report (gender sensitive), in cooperation with the national consultant, as agreed upon in the evaluation schedule and reporting terms in English, including recommendations for future project replication;
- Incorporate recommendation received from the Evaluation Focal Points and submit final report;

Expected deliverables:

The evaluator is responsible for submitting the following deliverables:

***Work plan** - within 2 days of the start of the assignment. The Consultant will submit the work plan which will include a detailed approach and methodology and schedule. In particular, the work plan will require a clear approach to data collection and work organization to examine the project in its full scope.*

***Preliminary findings and draft evaluation outline (inception report)** - within 6 days of the start of the assignment, the Consultant will share a draft report. The purpose of this report is to demonstrate progress on the assignment and adherence to the TORs and will identify any evaluation issues that may need further clarification before completion of the assignment.*

***Presentation of findings** - within 8 days of the start of the assignment a presentation of findings and preliminary recommendations to key stakeholders will be carried out. The purpose of this session is to provide opportunity for initial validation and support further elaboration of the evaluators’ findings and recommendations.*

***Final evaluation report** - within 4 days of receiving the consolidated comments from projects’ stakeholders, the Consultant will submit a final document that addresses relevant comments and provides comprehensive reporting on all elements of the assignment. This report will be submitted to the evaluation contact points for clearance.*

As a minimum, the Evaluation Report (draft or final, gender-sensitive) shall include the following components (the exact structure of the report may be influenced by the project components and components of the Evaluation TOR): Executive Summary; Introduction (Project outline; Methodology; Analysis; Findings; Best Practices and Lessons Learned; Recommendations; Relevant Annexes, for example: a. List of people interviewed; b. List of acronyms; c. Evaluation work plan and TOR; d. List of key reference documents as well as annexes of a. Most Significant Change Stories; b. Power point presentation of the main findings and recommendations;

***Summary of the report** - a three-page summary of the Project Evaluation Report should be provided in addition to the fully-fledged evaluation report.*

8.3. LIST OF REVIEWED DOCUMENTS

- ESERE Project Document including all related annexes
- ESERE interim reports
- ESERE amendment of project documents
- Minutes of Project Management Committee meetings
- Package of several publications produced under the ESERE project
- Relevant correspondences of the project
- National Action Plan for the Integration of Roma and Egyptians
- Assessment Report on the National Action Plan for the Integration of Roma and Egyptians for the year 2017
- Progress report on the implementation of the EU-Albania conclusions of the policy dialogue seminar
- Albania's Progress Report of the European Union 2016
- Albania's Progress Report of the European Union 2017
- Albania's Progress Report of the European Union 2018
- UN Basic Principles and Guidelines on Development based Evictions and Displacement
- Intervention Plan "On the settlement of Roma families, living by the riverside", Tirana Municipality
- Project Proposal on Transitory Programme for Roma and Egyptian Recyclers in Tirana
- "Support to the Social Inclusion of Roma and Egyptian Communities in Albania"
- SSIREC Project Document including all related annexes
- Regional Roma Survey 2017: Country Factsheet Albania, UNDP
- "EU Regional Action for Roma Education: Increased education opportunities and employability for Roma Students and Roma Youth in Western Balkans and Turkey
- Joint DG NEAR and Council of Europe Programme "Promoting good governance and Roma empowerment at local level"
- EU-funded project" Joint Initiative to Empower Roma Civil Society in the Western Balkans and Turkey"
- EU-funded RCC "Roma Integration 2020" project
- "Roma at a glance Albania", Regional Roma Survey supported by the EU, the World Bank and UNDP

- National Strategy and Action Plan on Gender Equality, Albania
- “Breaking the Cycle of Roma Exclusion in the Western Balkans”, Monica Robayo-Abril, Natalia Millan, World Bank

8.4. LIST OF STAKEHOLDERS INTERVIEWED

Nr.	Name	Organisation	Position
1	Limya Eltayeb	UNDP	UNDP Resident Representative
2	Entela Lako	UNDP	Programme Specialist
3	Mirjeta Ramizi	UNDP, ESERE Project	Project Manager
4	Jorida Malevi	UNDP, ESERE Project	Community Development Coordinator
5	Iva Nathanaili	UNDP, ESERE Project	Employment Coordinator
6	Kleves Alimerko	UNDP, ESERE Project	Finance and Administrative Assistant
7	Olesja Cili	UNDP, ESERE Project	Local Coordinator Tirana
8	Blegina Hado	UNDP, ESERE Project	Program and Public Information Assistant
9	Isida Rrapi	UNDP, ESERE Project	Community Exchange Worker
10	Briselda Rreme	UNDP, ESERE Project	Employment Mediator
11	Xhenson Çela	UNDP, ESERE Project	Employment Expert
12	Klajdi Bitri	UNDP, ESERE Project	Employment Intern
13	Alessandro Angius	EU Delegation	Programme Manager for Civil Society and Human Rights
14	Besnik Rama	Ministry of Education, Sport and Youth	Specialist at the Sector of Education Policies and Strategies
15	Manjola Veizi	CSO Roma Women Right Center	Executive Director
16	Emiliano Aliu	CSO Roma Versitas Albania	Executive Director
17	Fatjona Bisheva	Albanian School of Public	Specialist

		Administration	
18	Amelia Cili	n/a	Beneficiary of the employment promotion program
19	Anisa Ruseti	Municipality of Tirana	Head of General Directory of Social Services
20	Migena Spaho	Municipality of Tirana	Head of Social Protection and Inclusion Directory
21	Pellumb Furtuna	NGO Romani Baxt for Development and Integration	Executive Director
22	Alma Dervishi	School as community center "Gjon Buzuku" Tirana	School Director
23	Armand Mile	n/a	Barber at barbershop Mile brothers
24	Marsel Mile	n/a	Barber at barbershop Mile brothers
25	Eva Rrahmani	Multifunctional Community Center, Shkoze	Director
26	Shpresa Spahiu	CSO Help for children	Executive Director
27	Ledi Fiora	Eco Tirana	Marketing director and staff of the transitory programme for Roma and Egyptian recyclers
28	Elsa Kajo	Eco Tirana	Team Leader
29	Pellumb Dungaj	Eco Tirana	Inspector
30	Roland Bajrami	Eco Tirana	Inspector
31	Ylli Mejdani	Eco Tirana	Inspector
32	Bledi Tahoe	IRCA Institute of Romani Culture in Albania	Executive Director
33	Redi Kodra	n/a	Beneficiaries of income generation activities related

			to art and music
34	Xhemali Moku	n/a	Beneficiaries of income generation activities related to art and music
35	Rexhino Lufta	n/a	Beneficiaries of income generation activities related to art and music
36	Fatmir Mustafa	n/a	Beneficiaries of income generation activities related to art and music
37	Ervis Koci	n/a	Beneficiaries of income generation activities related to art and music
38	Emanuela Hasani	n/a	Beneficiaries of income generation activities, tailor shop Berat
39	Meljana Murataj	n/a	Beneficiaries of income generation activities, tailor shop Berat
40	Matilda Elbasani	n/a	Beneficiaries of income generation activities, tailor shop Berat
41	Afrim Sylyku	n/a	Beneficiaries of income generation activities, tailor shop Berat
42	Klementina Lika	n/a	Beneficiaries of income generation activities, tailor shop Berat
43	Gezim Zema	Municipality of Berat	General Secretary
44	Sadete Myftari	Municipality of Berat	Director of Social Services
45	Shaqir Abedini	School as community center "Shyqyri Lakra" Berat	School Director
46	Anila Vrap	Community Upgrading	Director of nursery

		Project, reconstructed nursery	
47	Igli Roli, Sokol Sula	n/a	Parents of children attending the nursery
48	Ingrid Jones	Partners for children CSO (managing Multifunctional Community Center, in “Ish-Pjeshkore” Berat)	Executive Director
49	Alda Kondakciu	Partners for children CSO (managing Multifunctional Community Center, in “Ish	Specialist
50	Adela Cabej	Partners for children CSO (managing Multifunctional Community Center, in “Ish	Specialist
51	Betina Kadena	Partners for children CSO (managing Multifunctional Community Center, in “Ish	Specialist
52	Petref Qato	Marble processing factory “Qato” Berat	Business Administrator
53	Rudin Shtembari	n/a	Beneficiary of income generation programme, marble processing
54	Mustafa Shtembari	n/a	Beneficiary of income generation programme, marble processing
55	Nadire Rrenja	“Llambi Goxhomani” School Berat	Teacher at the basic part-time education for adults
56	Robert Nazari	UNDP ESERE Project	Local Coordinator Berat
57	Merita Xhafaj	Ministry of Health and Social Protection	Head of Department of Policies and Development
58	Majlinda Mema	Regional Employment	Head of Office

		Office, Durres	
59	Marilda Guzmari	Regional Employment Office, Durres	Specialist
60	Meme Xhaferaj	Municipality of Durres	Director of Social Services Department
61	Ornela Hamataj	Multifunctional Community Center Durres	Director
62	Lutfi Dervishi	Municipality Unit, No.2 Durres	Inspector
63	Davide Ndoj	Municipality Unit, No.4 Durres	Administrator
64	Suzana Disha	Municipality Unit, No.4 Durres	Inspector
65	Ismail Jakupi	Ushten CSO	Executive Director
66	Antonio Avdia	n/a	Beneficiary of the employment promotion program working at furniture production business "Korca" in Durres
67	Bajram Zeqiri	n/a	Beneficiary of the employment promotion program working at furniture production business "Korca" in Durres
68	Naze Ymeri	UNDP ESERE Project	Local Coordinator Durres
69	Majlinda Xhaibra	UNDP ESERE Project	Local Coordinator Shkozet, Durres
70	Etleva Luli	UNDP ESERE Project	Local Coordinator Shkoder
71	Roza Sytari	Multifunctional Community Center Shkodra, Arsis NGO staff	Specialist
72	Xhyhere Ahmeti	Multifunctional Community Center	Community mediator

		Shkodra, Arsis NGO staff	
73	Shpresa Mirashi	Multifunctional Community Center Shkodra, Arsis NGO staff	Social worker
74	Brunilda Rakaj	Multifunctional Community Center Shkodra, Arsis NGO staff	Psychologist
75	Arnisa Bushati	Multifunctional Community Center Shkodra, Arsis NGO staff	Social worker
76	Filip Vila	Municipality of Shkodra	Director of Social Services
77	Ledi Basha	“Deshmoret e Prishtines” school, part-time for adults programme Shkoder	School Director
78	Emiljano Kovaci	n/a	Beneficiary of the employment promotion program
79	Elis Terroti	“Reklama Terroti” business Shkodra	Business Administrator, employment promotion program
80	Bashkim Hasani	n/a	Beneficiary of income generation programme, barber shop
81	Zymyle Seferi	Nurse at the Maternity of Shkodra	Beneficiary of the employment promotion program

8.5. EVALUATION MATRIX

ESERE PROJECT EVALUATION MATRIX						
Evaluation criteria	Evaluation Questions	Specific Sub-Questions/Criteria	Data Sources	Data collection Methods / Tools	Indicators/ Success Standard <i>(to the extent such information relating to these indicators exists and is accessible to the evaluator)</i>	Methods for Data Analysis
R E L E V A N C E	1. To what extent has ESERE (its purpose and its objectives) been consistent with, and supportive of national priorities in the relevant sector (Roma & Egyptian Socio-economic, educational, cultural integration), regional Western Balkan priorities and EU integration priorities?	- References to & linkages between UNDP Albania mandates/Strategies with project objectives, activities and results	- Project documents - Stakeholder interviews - NAP for R&E integration...	- Review of programme-related documents - Additional relevant documents identified from research - Evaluation interviews - Concrete project examples	- Verifiable references to local, national, regional, EU, UN SDG priorities at Policy, Strategy, Action Plan in the Project Proposal - Verifiable linkages with UNDP Albania Strategy - Level of clarity of the formulation of strategic and programme objectives - Coherence with existing policies relevant to the sector of intervention	Review, comparison and triangulation of gathered information (review/web-based research/interview)
	2.To what extent has the programme responded to the needs and priorities of the target groups?	- Has there been a consultative process to identify needs and priorities? Clear relation between needs/priorities & activities/outputs/expected outcomes	idem	Idem	- Evidence of consultative process - Project needs assessment conducted - Evidence of reports or records of assessments of needs and priorities - Evidence of reference to consultative process in programmatic documents and activities	Idem

		- Are identified needs and priorities coherent with those highlighted in other strategic, policy, programme documents				
	3. To what extent have ESERE objectives been updated in order to adapt to changes in the sector?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Changes within project? - Changes (policy, priorities, needs, context) in the sector? 	idem	idem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Changes in programmes goals, objectives, design, target groups, target locations, resources, outputs, outcomes, implementation mechanisms, partners - Updated policies and strategies; amendments to policies and strategies 	Idem
	4. To what extent was ESERE designed in a manner relevant to the needs and problems identified (i.e. clarity of objectives, use of indicators)? Did the project adequately respond to the identified needs of the beneficiaries?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Projects respond to assessed/verified and relevant needs - Project objectives are coherent and in line with established EU, Albania Government policy priorities. - Objectives are strategic, clearly and adequately defined, measurable. Outputs and expected outcomes equipped with indicators 	idem	idem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clear relation between ESERE objectives and identified needs. Was all relevant data available? Were baselines set and updated for each indicator? Were target values set for the indicators and were they realistic have needs assessment taken place? - Project objectives relate to national priorities - Indicators are developed at Objective, outputs, outcomes-level. 	Idem
	5. Were any synergies with other projects	Synergies &	idem	idem	- Joint actions, cooperation,	Idem

	funded by donors identified?	mechanisms clearly established & functioning with other projects or initiatives			complementarity with other relevant projects, exchanges of good practices, sharing of resources, agreements	
	6. To what extent have all relevant stakeholders been involved?	<p>Consultation of stakeholders during ESERE project design phases & implementation</p> <p>Involved stakeholders have clearly roles & responsibilities in ESERE project</p>	idem	idem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consultation, integration of inputs from stakeholders to ESERE and - Formal definition of roles and responsibilities for involved stakeholders 	Idem
	7. To what extent has the implementation of the project taken into account the existing conditions, needs and issues of Roma and Egyptians?	<p>ESERE activities answer identified priority needs of R&E communities</p> <p>Project approach (implementation mechanisms) is appropriate to local context</p>	idem	Idem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Beneficiary satisfaction, employment stability, small business performance - Local stakeholders are effectively using project mechanisms 	Idem
	8. Did ESERE activities contribute to the realisation of the National Action Plan on Roma and Egyptian integration 2015-2020?	ESERE activities & objectives are clearly linked to and supportive of NAP objectives and recommended actions	idem	idem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Evidence of comparative analysis effectively conducted - Evidence of selection process (criteria...) - Evidence of selected partners' comparative advantage effectively verified during implementation/through project results 	Idem

E F F E C T I V E N E S S	1. To what extent have ESERE planned activities been achieved on time?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Have all outputs been delivered on time and/or as per the plan? - Have all outputs been delivered timely as well as qualitatively and quantitatively? 	Idem	Idem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Evidence of timely delivery of outputs - Evidence of quantitative targets reached - Evidence of qualitative standards achieved 	Idem
	2. To what extent have the activity delivery mechanisms and management practices been appropriate for the achievement of the ESERE objectives?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mechanisms allowing timely delivery of activities - Any delays, unresolved issues relating to reporting, delivery of activities - Is timely or late delivery of activities the results of efficient or inefficient mechanism - Has there been management issues? - Have management teams and systems able to solve challenges timely? - Is monitoring information effectively used to adjust/improve the management of programmatic activities? 	Idem	idem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Verifiable evidence of achievements of results (through field visits, interviews, reports) - Verifiable evidence of stakeholder effectively producing results/Satisfaction of beneficiary with intervention results 	Idem
	3. To what extent have the targeted Roma	Clear, transparent	Idem	idem	- Evidence of outreach to	Idem

	and Egyptian communities in Albania been able to access ESERE services and benefits?	selection mechanisms made public and based on clear eligibility criteria			beneficiaries - No reports of eligible beneficiaries denied access to activities (beneficiary complaints mechanisms exist)	
	4. To what extent has the project adapted to changing external conditions in order to ensure benefits for the target groups and the achievement of ESERE results?	- (policy, contextual, other) changes that occurred during implementation - ESERE capacity to adjust to changes through appropriate mechanisms	Idem	Idem	- Observable reported changes during implementation. - Evidence of ESERE adaptation to these changes	Idem
	5. To what extent have the specific Roma and Egyptians targeted groups been satisfied with the services provided?	- Degree of satisfaction of beneficiaries with services and support provided by ESERE - Indicators (employment, livelihood, social integration) of improvement of beneficiary conditions	Idem	Idem	- Beneficiary satisfaction surveyed (through monitoring, survey...)	Idem
	6. To what extent have ESERE activities been implemented? To what extent outputs have been produced as expected? Are the project objectives expected to be reached by the end of the project?	ESERE results are verifiable, visible, documented and in conformity with objectives	Idem	Idem	- Satisfaction of beneficiaries with services provided - Formal existence of monitoring & evaluation mechanisms collecting beneficiary feedback	Idem
	7. Did the outputs lead to the expected outcomes (To what extent the social inclusion of Roma and Egyptians has	- Logical relation from ESERE outputs	Idem	Idem	- Formal relation from output to outcome level established and	Idem

	improved since the beginning of the project)?	leading to outcomes - Outcomes are answering identified priority needs of R&E			verified during implementation with measurable results	
	8. Have any factor (processes, organisational and implementation mechanisms, actions, actors, resources...) hindered or supported the achievement of objectives?	- Challenging factors identified and addressed - Opportunities supporting achievement of objectives identified and used - Beneficiary selection mechanisms clearly established and communicated?	Idem	Idem	- Identified, reports and responses to such factors	Idem
	9. Did ESERE activities contribute to the implementation of the National Action Plan on Roma and Egyptian integration 2015-2020?	- Evidence demonstrating how ESERE results and activities have supported National Action Plan on Roma and Egyptian integration 2015-2020.	Idem	Idem	- ESERE includes components clearly indicating it is designed to support the implementation of NAP for the integration of Roma & Egyptians	Idem
E F F I C I	1. To what extent have the project means been utilised in an optimal manner?	- Utilisation of programme means & resources per activity/result	Idem	Idem	- Extent of usage of programme means	Idem
	2. To what extent have the project activities been delivered on time?	- Activities implemented as per project planning & leading to expected	Idem	Idem	- Number of activities timely launched as per project plan	Idem

E N C Y		results delivered on time				
	3. How efficiently have ESERE resources been converted into results?	- Comparison of use of resources (financial, time, staff, logistics) with results	Idem	Idem	- Number of beneficiaries assisted, cost per beneficiary and comparison with cost of job creation in Albania	Idem
	4. To what extent have the project management and coordination mechanisms allowed efficient implementation?	- Frequency & regularity of programme stakeholder meetings, Regularity of coordination meetings/ communications	Idem	Idem	- Number of meetings of project selection board; Number of project steering committee meetings	Idem
	5. To what extent have available resources been used?	Have there been unused resources? Have additional resources been necessary to implement actions?	Idem	Idem	Percentage of funds used Re-allocation of unspent funds. Ratio support costs/ beneficiary direct assistance.	Idem
	6. Were the project partners at local and national level effectively involved in the planning and implementation of the project?	- Consultation of national and local level stakeholders on implementation modalities - Evidence of stakeholder inputs reflected in implementation	Idem	Idem	-Number/frequency of consultations of national and local level stakeholders - Results of stakeholder consultations: inputs, decisions...	Idem
	7. Was implementation reporting appropriate and timely?	- Reporting is timely and its format appropriate to supporting efficient implementation,	Idem	Idem	- Production of regular reports - M&E, reporting mechanisms clearly established	Idem

		correcting/addressing challenges - ESERE is equipped with clear M&E, reporting mechanisms				
	8. Did the project delivered additional activities besides those foreseen or has ESERE mobilized additional funding besides its original budget?	- Were there additional activities or were more of the planned activities delivered? - Was additional funding mobilized?	Idem	Idem	- Additional activities or results delivered - Additional resource mobilized	Idem
S U S T A I N A B I L I T Y	1. Are the project beneficiaries likely to continue the professional activities they have engaged in beyond the end of ESERE?	- Are the various forms of employment and livelihoods created profitable and sustainable? Are skills-upgraded R&E likely to find jobs? Are CLLD likely to continue and received continued funding?	Idem	Idem	- Number of employment and income-generating activities still existing and profitable or stable - Indicators of sustainable perspectives for employments created and upgraded-skills job seekers - Indicators CLLD are likely to continue	Idem
	2. What is the likelihood that the results of the project activities will be sustained without further project support?	- What are the realistic expectations from the projects in terms of sustainability? - Which indicators or elements of sustainability have been identified? - Based on identified sustainability	Idem	Idem	- Existence of sustainability expectations defined (objectives, plan, resources, indicators...) - Commitments/perspective of continued - Identified elements of expected sustainability without further UNDP support	Idem

		elements, to which extent are programmatic activities results sustainable without further support?				
	3. Will local authorities be able to continue supporting the project established mechanisms beyond the project implementation?	- Are local authorities likely to further support and use project established mechanisms?	Idem	Idem	- Institutionalisation of project activities, established initiatives by local authorities - Commitment of further resources, further objectives established by local authorities/stakeholders	Idem
	4. To what extent have the project mechanisms ensured that the intended results are sustainable beyond the project implementation?	- Are there elements indicators results are likely to continue in the future? Are there mechanisms that were created through ESERE for assuring the continuity of the actions or the continuity of the processes/situations that were generated?	Idem	Idem	- Are there indicators of sustainability? (Number of employment, income-generating activities still existing/profitable with longer-term perspectives ...) - Mechanisms (CLLD) that will support results after the end of ESERE.	Idem
	5. What best practices emerged from ESERE implementation?	- Identified best practices	Idem	Idem	- Examples of best practice	Idem
	6. Has an "exit strategy" been identified/formulated/agreed upon?	Are there mechanisms for the involvement of stakeholders in longer-term actions?	Idem	Idem	- Exit strategy or perspectives for the continuation of services/progress of realisation of NAP for R&E integration.	Idem
I M P	1. What are the direct impacts/expected impacts prospects of the project?	- Impacts of Work Packages 1,2,3 and 4 on beneficiary lives	Idem	Idem	- ESERE results as per Work Package 1,2,3 & 4 - Impacts induced by ESERE results (e.g. reduced unemployment among R&E, increased nb of R&E registering to unemployment	Idem

A C T					office, increased R&E participation to local socio-economic life...)	
	2. To what extent does the project produced indirect positive and /or negative impacts?	- Identifiable indirect positive and /or negative impacts	Idem	Idem	- Positive indirect impacts compared with negative indirect impacts on socio-economic inclusion - Changes in attitudes/opinions of local institutions/population towards R&E integration capacity.	Idem
	3. What are the broader effects and impacts of the project?	- Identifiable broader effects and impacts of ESERE on in terms of local economy, environment, gender, human rights, social inclusion local governance...	Idem	Idem	- Observable broader effects of the programme	Idem
	4. To which extent has ESERE made a real improvement to targeted Roma and Egyptians' social inclusion (access to basic services, employment perspectives...) and living conditions both at the individual and community level?	- Observable (quantitative, qualitative) changes to Roma and Egyptian social inclusion, based on relevant indicators (access to basic services, employment perspectives, participation to local life...)	Idem	Idem	- Identified life improvement indicators (reduced unemployment rate, increased access to public services, reduced school dropout rates and other recorded data on R&E social inclusion improvement)	Idem
	5. Which changes regarding the project stakeholders and other relevant actors have emerged in relation to supported actions? What factors have been identified that are driving or hindering progress?	- Measurable/visible (positive or negative) changes with stakeholders and other actors: improved capacity, change/institutionalis	Idem	Idem	- Identified (positive or negative) factors: e.g. budget commitment of municipalities supporting CLLD initiatives, private sector investment in minorities businesses, increased number of R&E hired by employers...	Idem

		ation of role, increased awareness (among private sectors actors), human rights (improved perceptions of Roma and Egyptians) seen as a productive and positive actor versus a social burden, improved perception of minorities towards authorities).				
	6. What added-value has UNDP brought to the project?	- Expertise from UNDP - Leverage/lobby with Gov. of Albania, EU, other stakeholders to promote R&E social inclusion...	Idem	Idem	- Evidence of added-value of UNDP to ESERE project	Idem
G E N D E R E Q U A L I T	1. To what extent has gender been effectively integrated into the design and implementation of the Mission's programmatic activities?	- How has gender been effectively integrated in the design of ESERE? (gender markers, theory of change for gender situation...) - To which extent the gender dimension has been integrated into ESERE activities during implementation?	Idem	idem	Project proposals featuring clear description on expected results/resources/actions/indicators related to gender equality - Description of gender equality expected results at programme level - Gender equality-related results obtained by ESERE	Idem

Y		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What are the specific results of ESERE in relation to gender? - Is Gender disaggregated data available? 				
	2. Has ESERE been implemented according to existing (UN, EU, Albania) gender equality principles rights?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - References and linkages in ESERE proposal to Gender Equality principles and UNDP/EU/Gov. of Albanian Gender policy. - Are there concrete examples of those principles translated into concrete actions? 	Idem	Idem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - (All) Project proposals making clear references to gender equality principles (& Albania gender equality policy priorities) with clear explanation on how activities meet those standards/contribute to those principles - Identified examples of such actions 	Idem
	3. What have been the specific benefits of ESERE to women as beneficiaries?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identified project benefits specifically affected women 	Idem	Idem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identified specific benefits 	
H U M A N R I G H T S	1. Has the project been implemented according to human rights principles?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How have human rights been effectively integrated in the design of ESERE? - To which extent have human rights (specifically related to socio-economic, cultural discrimination of minorities) been 	Idem	Idem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clear project reference to human rights principles and more specifically to the rights Roma and Egyptians in Albania and legal framework supporting it. - Clear evidence of ESERE activities supporting fulfilment of those rights - ESERE specific results supporting advancing R&E rights 	Idem

		<p>integrated into ESERE activities during implementation?</p> <p>- What are the specific results of ESERE in relation to the rights of Roma & Egyptians?</p>				
	2. To what extent have human rights been effectively integrated into the design and implementation of the project?	<p>- References and linkages in ESERE proposal to the rights of Roma & Egyptians with UNDP/EU/Gov. of Albanian policy.</p> <p>- Are there concrete examples of those principles translated into concrete actions?</p>	Idem	Idem	<p>- Linkages of ESERE to the rights of Roma & Egyptians and policy priorities set by UNDP/EU/Gov. of Albanian policy.</p> <p>- Explanation of ESERE activities and results supporting the rights of R&E in Albania.</p>	Idem
	3. Has ESERE implementation experienced specific situations of concern in relation to human rights?	<p>- Identified situations of concerns to the rights of Roma and Egyptians</p>	Idem	Idem	<p>- Specific situations identified</p>	Idem