



## Article

# Preparation of Two Participatory Social Housing Interventions in a Marginalised Roma Community in Romania

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**Abstract:** The first desegregation efforts in the marginalised and segregated communities in the Pata-Rât area were carried out within the frames of two social housing projects (between 2014–2017 and 2020–2023). Although a housing first methodology would have been more adequate in the context of a marginalised community, given the shortcomings of the Romanian social assistance system, implementation was impossible. In this context, it was necessary to develop a system to access social housing but also to create a reasonably ‘fair process’ at the community level. Thus, in both interventions, the starting point for developing the social housing criteria was to survey the community in order to explore the community members’ preferences regarding the criteria to be considered in the selection of the beneficiary families for the social houses. The surveys covered all the inhabitants of the Pata-Rât area, that is 219 households in the first survey and 282 households in the second. The survey results served as the basis for the development of the criteria for accessing social housing. In this article, we present and discuss the results of the community surveys from 2016 and from 2020, the year of the pandemic outbreak. Differences were found in the prioritisation of criteria, with an increasing preference for those reflecting vulnerability/needs (e.g., number of children, years spent in the community, disability) and decreasing preference for the ones indicating family resources (e.g., employment, income, education). These differences reflect the increase in poverty and loss of resources occurring in the community during this period, due both to the COVID-19 pandemic, and to the relocation of the 35 better-off families in the first Pata-Cluj project.



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## 1. Introduction

The present article proposes to explore an example of spatial desegregation and social inclusion initiative in Romania, Pata-Rât, a segregated Roma settlement on the outskirts of Cluj Napoca. Within two consecutive interventions, 65 apartments outside Pata-Rât were built and purchased exclusively for the members of the communities in Pata-Rât, starting the territorial desegregation process of the area. Since the number of housing units within these two projects cover not more than about 20% of the total amount of housing units needed for the territorial desegregation of the communities living at present in the Pata-Rât area, the interventions had to tackle the issue of first having to select 35, then 30 families that would receive these apartments. As community participation was one of the transversal methods used in the first pilot project, action research was employed to understand the priorities of community members in relation to the selection criteria. The results informed the design and implementation of the housing intervention. The Pata Rât area being the most impoverished neighbourhood of the city, the need for extensive social support for sustaining social houses was obvious. Qualitative methods were used to find out the needs of the inhabitants in the context of rehousing and desegregation.

This paper discusses the importance of community participation, as well as the findings on the community consultations, the social support needed and the changes of the criteria for access to social housing in the preferences of communities in Pata-Rât during

the two housing interventions in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Data is predominantly drawn from the action research conducted in the framework of these two consecutive projects, both funded by the EEA and Norway Grants. The first project, called Pata-Cluj (2015–2017) was aimed at piloting the desegregation and social inclusion of the communities currently living in Pata-Rât, by developing participatory methodologies with the explicit purpose to inform the elaboration and implementation of social inclusion policies. The most ambitious objective of the project was to pilot residential/spatial desegregation with different types of social housing: collective and individual social housing units, both in rural and urban areas, as well as the provision of services related to social housing, i.e., assisting families with complex and less complex social inclusion needs.

The Pata-Cluj project was followed by another, Pata 2.0 (2019–2023), which continues to pursue the objective of housing desegregation. Following an evaluation process, the housing methodology developed in the first project (eligibility criteria, assessment tools and support services) was further developed in the second one.

### *1.1. The Need to Desegregate Pata-Rât*

According to the FRA study (FRA: European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights 2017) on discrimination, Roma respondents were the second most discriminated ethnic group in Europe (26% felt discrimination in the year prior to the study). All over Europe, discrimination overlaps with housing disadvantage, with an impact on basic environmental necessities. In Romania, in comparison with the rest of Europe, the situation is even more dramatic. Most Roma live in extreme housing impoverishment (unstable structure, illegal property, lack of minimal hygienic conditions), many of them in toxic environments, near garbage dumps or rural places where there is no waste collection, while segregation seems to be more a rule than an exception (Niță 2009; Berescu et al. 2006).

According to the FRA study (FRA: European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights 2014) on poverty and employment of the Roma population, Romania has the worst housing conditions in the EU, 82% of the Roma population lack water, electricity, or sewage (FRA: European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights 2017). With regard to hunger, Romania is on first place in the EU, both for adults and children (66% of children and 60% of adults go to bed hungry because they do not have enough to eat). These have devastating consequences on children's and adults' basic hygiene, health, education and employment.

While the problems are huge, the Romanian government, like so many other European governments (Rostas 2019) fails to adequately tackle the complex problems related to the situation of more than 3% of its country's citizens. Although there are some initiatives, for example in order to be in line with the European Directives, the Government of Romania launched several programs, among them, in 2016 an Anti-Poverty Package, a package of programs in which social housing was mentioned as an area for improvement. Unfortunately, the implementation of the program in the last few years was reduced only to "ad hoc slum upgrading" (Berescu 2019, p. 190). There is no serious investment at the local level in the desegregation of the worst Roma settlements, where people are living in extremely inhuman conditions, in fact, certain measures are worsening the situation. For example, the continuation of evictions of families incapable of paying the rent from social houses, contributes to the growing number of residents in urban slums, such as Pata Rât. The reasons are complex, from the lack of a proper definition of the terminology and of the problems to the lack of collaboration between the central and local authorities regarding the necessity of desegregation, the different forms of oppression, such as social exclusion and marginalisation, racism and anti-gypsism, the lack of political and economic power of the Roma population, etc. Unfortunately, the inadequate handling of the problems only increases them, in spite of sporadic and project-based efforts of NGO-s, which try to fill the gaps that become bigger and bigger.

The Pata-Rât area, situated on the outskirts of the municipality of Cluj-Napoca, near the city's landfill, 7 km from the city centre, presents a case of social marginalisation, in fact one of the most critical ones in Romania, "cumulating the effects of polluted environment,

geographical isolation, socio-territorial segregation, housing deprivation and cultural stigmatisation" (Bădiță and Vincze 2019, p. 7). The Pata-Rât area became gradually populated even before 1990, with each community, family and individual presenting their own distinct history and different features (Raț 2013; Vincze 2013). The structural factors determining the concentration of the population in this segregated area are manifold, including the loss of jobs caused by the closing of state enterprises, the increasing housing costs in the city, as well as relocations and evictions carried out by the local authorities. Some inhabitants moved into the community upon reaching adulthood after having outgrown the child protection system and having been left without any housing possibilities. The lack of specific, efficient services targeting family and social reintegration after institutional care, coupled with an unstable economic and social context, led to many young adults ending up settling in this area (Tonk et al. 2017b).

According to the surveys, around 1500 people live in Pata-Rât, structured into four distinct colonies: Dallas, Rampa (Landfill), Cantonului and Coastei (Bădiță and Vincze 2019; Raț 2013). The four communities of Pata-Rât have different histories and distinct socio-economic conditions. Dallas and Rampa are the oldest ones.

The Rampa community consists of mainly Romanes-speaking Roma inhabitants—part of a larger group of Kalderash—who used to live in improvised tents in the forests near the city. They were moved by the Police to the landfill in 2003 (Raț 2013). Other inhabitants (were) moved from other counties to work and make a living at the landfill by collecting, storing and processing waste. They are living in small shacks near the garbage dumps, in very polluted circumstances, with no access to water and electricity. The Dallas community was created by individuals and families who had arrived here more or less of their own accord, forced by their socioeconomic circumstances which effectively made living in the city unsustainable (Vincze 2013). The Cantonului community began to take shape starting in the late 1990s due to evictions from different neighbourhoods. The inhabitants were forced out from Cluj-Napoca in several smaller waves and were directed to live on Cantonului street or they moved here from the city as a consequence of increasingly expensive rental costs (Raț 2013). Although many of them received single-room container houses from two NGOs, they do not own their homes and have never been acknowledged as legal settlers (Raț 2013; Bădiță and Vincze 2019). The Coastei community emerged in 2010 when the local administration designated a formerly industrial district near the landfill as a residential area. The 10 modular 'social housing' units constructed there were meant to cover the housing needs of 76 families evicted by the City Hall from Coastei street in December 2010 (Bădiță and Vincze 2019).

The vast majority of the members of the Pata-Rât community self-identify as Roma ethnics (Vincze 2013). The extremely polluted environment, the spatial isolation, the lack of housing security, the inaccessibility of public education, the absence of health-care and job opportunities, the precariousness of the dwellings (overcrowding, missing lavatory or kitchen, unavailable basic utilities like electricity and water, and a largely nonexistent sewage system) are only a few of the deeply troublesome aspects related to living in Pata-Rât (Bădiță and Vincze 2019; Raț 2013; Vincze 2013). Living in Pata Rât is itself linked to experiences of discrimination, exploitation and violence and extremely limited access to public services (social housing or benefits for housing, support services regarding employment and education).

Living in Pata-Rât is dangerous and life-threatening, in a rights-based perspective it affects every single human right. It is a pressing need to improve the inhuman quality of life, and while slum upgrading is totally inappropriate in these areas, great efforts would be needed to develop adequate relocation strategies and procedures, rapidly construct/purchase houses and provide the necessary services. As Sika et al. (2020) stated, a housing-first methodology would be suitable for this group, where housing is considered the prerequisite for improvement in other areas of life. However, as many authors highlighted, top-down measures can easily fail, as well as forceful urban mixing (Rezeanu 2015; Sika et al. 2020). When ignoring the local needs, desegregation policies and measures can

cause even more segregation and/or increase the residents' vulnerability (Filčák and Stager 2014). Therefore, while developing and implementing a project aiming at desegregation and social integration of the residents, it is imperative to offer choices, to build mechanisms to listen to the voices of Roma residents, and to show respect for the preferences of the target group (Lux 2011; Rostas 2019).

Promoting Roma participation would be important not only on a policy level, as Rostas (2019) highlights, but also in developing and implementing a pilot project on housing, which can have such a huge impact on their lives. Surviving so many forms of oppression (racism and anti-gypsism, evictions, discrimination, social exclusion, educational and housing segregation) inevitably leads to psychological, social, economic and political powerlessness and increases vulnerability which is governing the investment strategies in their living space, future, psychological wellbeing, etc. (Rostas 2019; Berescu 2019). So, empowerment through participation is a prerequisite of a successful intervention even if we are aware that it is highly improbable that an ethnic group with such reduced political power will be able to influence the public agenda and define and negotiate its priorities (which, according to Rostas (2019), would be a necessary condition for successful investment in the improvement of the life conditions of Roma citizens) without the help of the majority.

### 1.2. *The Effects of the Pandemic*

Periods of crisis, in our case COVID-19 reinforce and magnify these inequalities as institutional resources are more limited. Research showed that COVID-19 increased the number of people falling into poverty (Lara and Mendez Ramos 2021). Minority ethnic groups are more likely to live in areas with higher infection rates and the risk of exposure is also higher (Harris and Brunson 2022). Across Europe, the Roma have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic, both directly (in terms of increased rates of infections, hospitalisations, and deaths) and indirectly (e.g., in terms of increased inequality and stigmatization) (Holt 2021). The state of emergency and the lockdown in early 2020 have likely worsened poverty in ghetto settlements (Cace et al. 2010) and these measures further worsen the medical and social situation of the Roma, thereby COVID-19 is becoming an indicator of inequality (Kamburova and Georgieva 2021). The Roma are considered one of the most affected groups, as 80% of the Roma population live in poverty, on a precarious income and in crowded households (FRA: European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights 2020).

Housing inequality is one of the factors that makes marginalised communities more vulnerable to the effects of the pandemic. Segregated settlements are usually characterised by poor living and sanitary conditions, a high burden of infectious and non-communicable diseases (Holt 2021). Furthermore, in overcrowded homes and settlements physical distancing is almost impossible. These conditions have been aggravated by lack of access to water, sewage systems and electricity. And the vaccine uptake was low among the Roma, especially in the Balkan region (9% Hungary, 11.5% North Macedonia) (Holt 2021). Distrust in state institutions and health services only aggravated this situation. There are also consequences on income loss. Research showed a substantial reduction in income, hampering of the access and the demand for informal work, a declared inability to afford the essentials of life for Roma communities (Willis 2022). In Romania, for example, reports indicate the disproportionate impact of mobility restrictions on persons of precarious socio-economic status (ICCV Research Institute for the Quality of Life 2020a, 2020b).

The pandemic also had a harmful impact on education, bringing to the surface the complexities behind the school participation of Roma children. Under-financed and segregated schools, culturally non-inclusive curricula, a clear digital divide, language barriers, the negative impact of the pandemic on Roma parents shows the complexities of challenges (Zamorano 2022). Online education deepens inequalities in access to education of children from disadvantaged families, who also lose access to special programmes of remedial education and prevention of school dropout (UNICEF 2020)

The conditions described above, generated and/or exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, fully apply to the communities in Pata-Rât. The physical and social distance from the city, the lockdowns, the loss of employment opportunities, the decline in health services and the lack of trust in these services over the years have further deepened the marginalisation, isolation and impoverishment of the communities in Pata-Rât. During the pandemic, social services became even less accessible, either operating at reduced capacity or suspended entirely. At the time of the total lockdown, the only available support was offered for previously registered social welfare beneficiaries who received food from the local administration. The action research of Pata2.0 project regarding the housing criteria was conducted in this context.

The research results show unequivocally that poverty is deepening in segregated communities and that the exertion of the right of marginalised communities to self-sufficiency, work, education and health is even more obstructed. Violation of the exercise of rights is strongly linked to housing segregation. It becomes also clear that the majority society is less affected by the pandemic. These findings underline even more that housing desegregation should be the first step towards inclusion, which would lead to a uniform improvement in access to services. In the following, we present the two types of housing policies, their challenges and implications for interventions.

### 1.3. *Housing First versus Housing Ready Policies*

According to the Housing Act No 114/1996 in Romania (and subsequent amendments and supplements), local councils are responsible for the creation and management of social housing stock in order to meet local needs. The criteria for the allocation of social housing are established by the local councils, which translates into a considerable variation at national level in terms of whether members of marginalised groups actually have access to the housing intended for them. In practice, the increased demand for social housing and the insufficient supply of social housing units generates ‘competition’ between groups considered to have priority in this segment of housing (Ghițiu 2017).

Social housing allocation policies usually focus on different aspects of social vulnerability of the potential beneficiaries. However, these are typically complemented by additional considerations, such as their financial capacity to maintain housing or the necessity to live in the target area of the housing intervention, as well as the behaviour of potential beneficiaries, the family that is thought to minimise social risk being preferred. These characteristics are meant to signal that the family is ‘ready’ to be a tenant of social housing. Policies that build on this housing-ready approach tend to set up a set of accession criteria (revolving around sustainability, socially desirable behaviour, etc.) that the applicant has to meet (Tonk et al. 2017b).

In Romania, the provision of social housing is based on this idea of ‘readiness’ and is granted on condition that the applicant family can prove both the existence of family resources and its disadvantaged situation. The emphasis on income in the selection process of beneficiaries is a recurrent theme in the professional discourse, which highlights the fact that in the event of failure, the family is left ‘at fault’ for being unable to cover the costs of social housing (Tonk et al. 2017a). In this way, the access of the most vulnerable groups to accommodation becomes problematic, while structural violence, defined by Galtung as “built in the structure and show[ing] up as unequal power and consequently as unequal life chances” (Galtung 1969, p. 171), is overlooked as an explanation. This suggests that the current system favours the allocation of social housing to families that, in many cases, as they already are in the possession of the resources specified by the criteria, would be eligible for other types of support (e.g., rent subsidies on the private property market) (Tonk et al. 2017a). The situation in Pata-Rât is quite similar: often families that need social housing the most are not considered eligible to access the public social housing stock (Vincze 2013).

The housing first policy is a response to the housing ready approach and promotes a very low accession threshold in order to improve access for vulnerable families to social housing, based on the principle of the right to decent living conditions. “Housing First is a

recovery-oriented approach to homelessness that involves moving people who experience homelessness into independent and permanent housing as quickly as possible, with no preconditions, and then providing them with additional services and support as needed. The underlying principle of Housing First is that people are more successful in moving forward with their lives if they are first housed" (Gaetz et al. 2013, p. 2).

Its premise is that all human beings are 'prepared' to live in conditions worthy of human beings. A large part of the vulnerability of families and individuals stems precisely from precarious housing conditions, which in turn are a consequence of the structural problems in society. According to the housing first methodology, improving the social and economic situation of the beneficiary only becomes an objective once his/her housing conditions have stabilized, i.e., he/she is guaranteed long-term housing. The methodology envisages a comprehensive social assistance framework that includes voluntary participation in assistance programmes, a focus on recovery and individual well-being, individualised, client-centred support and social and community integration (Gaetz et al. 2013).

#### *1.4. Anti-Oppressive Practice and Community Participation*

Social oppression is very often embedded in institutional practice due to the failure to understand the complex needs of families, or to missing well-defined strategies to provide appropriate services. Young (1990) identifies five forms of oppression which, while embedded in policies and institutional practices perpetuates social inequalities: exploitation, marginalisation, powerlessness, cultural imperialism and violence. Exploitation stems from fixed social relations between social classes and groups, resulting in a transference of energies from one group to another, resulting in unequal distribution. Marginalisation pushes classes and groups of people to the margins of society, where they are excluded from useful participation in social life, and thus potentially exposed to severe material deprivation. Because of 'powerlessness', these categories of people experience inhibition in the development of their abilities, lack decision-making power in their lives, and are subject to disrespectful treatment because of their status. Cultural imperialism causes groups of people to experience that dominant meanings of society render the particular perspective of their group invisible, while at the same time stereotyping that group and labelling it as Other. Violence is systematically directed against members of a specific group simply because they are members of that group (Young 1990).

Anti-oppressive practice attempts to dismantle systemic inequalities that underlie social injustice and the "transformation lies in remedies formulated by service users"—it lies in social work and social policy makers giving up speaking about what the "target group" or "clients" need and listening to what they themselves say they need (Dumbrill 2003).

Community participation is defined in different ways, depending on the perspective used: in terms of individual, personalised relationships, broad collective civic participation, 'meaningful' participation, active participation in policy implementation, or shared or decentralized power and co-production (Kenny et al. 2015). Additionally, to this day, community participation has not been studied enough, especially through the lens of implementation theory, in order to assess whether the introduction and use of this approach in development projects is warranted, while researchers continue to debate definitions, models, and operational challenges to community participation (Kenny et al. 2015).

Community participation is defined by WHO as "a process by which people are enabled to become actively and genuinely involved in defining the issues of concern to them, in making decisions about factors that affect their lives, in formulating and implementing policies, in planning, developing and delivering services and in taking action to achieve change" (World Health Organization 2008, p. 10).

Benefits of community participation include its potential contribution to more culturally competent services and the personal empowerment of recipients of care (Petersen et al. 2012). Thus, formalising community participation in the development process and services can ensure that community voices are taken into consideration. Yet, not reducing power relations between community members and local actors to cultural differences is paramount

as power manifests not only in command-and-obey situations but also in the subtle capacity to set or negotiate priorities and courses of action (Feierman et al. 2010). Regarding the challenges that arise, Oakley's comment on participative processes is particularly poignant: "It must begin by recognising the powerful, multi-dimensional and, in many instances, anti-participatory forces which dominate the lives of ( . . . ) people. Centuries of domination and subservience will not disappear overnight just because we have 'discovered' the concept of participation" (Oakley 1991, p. 4). Because local governments have traditionally been reluctant to delegate power, the critical question is if "community participation is simply governments' attempts for legitimisation or neoliberal underpinnings of passing responsibility for design and delivery of services to end-users" (Kenny et al. 2015).

Although the term *community participation* is a debated one and it poses challenges for those who want to launch local development initiatives, there is still a consensus that it is recommended to ensure that services respond to local needs.

## 2. Research Methodology

As the Pata-Cluj project was a pilot project, one of its main objectives was to gain insight into the perceptions of the potential beneficiaries regarding how to improve their housing situation. To this end, it was necessary to develop a participatory process that would realistically guide the implementation of the intervention, as well as have an empowering effect. Therefore, the housing intervention methodology was developed in three steps, in an attempt to integrate different views and perspectives in elaborating the actual accession system: community level inquiry, institutional consultation and finally a Delphi group of experts from the project team. The results of the community level inquiry constituted the starting point for developing both the accession criteria and service design. The data gained from the community was further analysed by the stakeholders and the Delphi group, and the final methodology was built: accession criteria, assessment tools and service plans, housing allocation procedure.

For the Pata 2.0 project, the aim of the action research was the participatory revision of the existing criteria for granting social housing and the adaptation of the intervention to the new situation in the context of COVID-19.

For the purpose of this article, the focus will be on community-level inquiry which addressed two key issues.

1. Accessibility criteria for social housing in the frame of these specific interventions. For this purpose, *a.* community consultations were held in two turns (first in 2016 and repeated in 2020) regarding the method to be used to find out the preferences regarding housing criteria. and *b.* structured interviews on key housing criteria were realised also in two turns (Survey 1 in 2016 and Survey 2 in 2020).

Community consultations clearly revealed a preference from community members for sociological research covering the entire population, including separate interviews with each family, without using a sampling method. Thus, all households were contacted from three of the communities (Cantonului, Dallas, Coastei), and one interview was performed by each household with the participation of the adult members of the families who were at home at the time of the interview surveys. To maximise the participation of research subjects, interviewers approached the communities in the afternoons, after working hours. The interviews were conducted by the research team of the project promoter (Intercommunity Development Association—Cluj Metropolitan Area), between 1–5 July 2016, respectively by the research team of the Babeş-Bolyai University, Faculty of Sociology and Social Work, joined by colleagues from the IDA-CMA (Intercommunity Development Association—Cluj Metropolitan Area), between 1–5 July 2020.

Although in Survey 2, we intended to apply a standardized research tool, namely a questionnaire through which the respondents would have assessed the relevance of criteria applied in the first Pata-Cluj project, during community consultations we realised that a standardized tool could distort the answers and conceal essential implications. Hence, we dropped the tool developed initially, and applied a more generic, structured interview

guide during a face-to-face conversation at the place of residence of the respondents, more precisely in the open space near their shacks, just as in Survey 1. Taking into account that during the period of conducting the research, a state of emergency was in force as a measure of combating the COVID-19 pandemic, the rules of social distancing were followed, and the interviewers did not enter the dwellings. The fact that the interviews could not be conducted inside the dwellings of the respondents, affected the confidentiality of the answers; however, it contributed to the transparency of the process, and made the inhabitants aware of the fact that all of them would be interviewed.

2. Development of housing support services. For this purpose, community consultations were held on key requirements for adequate housing, and 8 focus groups were realised on services needed for sustainable housing.

When organising the focus groups in Dallas, Coastei and Canton, the specifics of the communities were taken into account first and foremost. Since we wanted the focus group participants to represent groups that were as homogeneous as possible, we chose to separate the groups based on gender and position of power, in order to create a discussion model in which women's opinions could be expressed openly. We preferred to organise a special group with community leaders to identify community dynamics and topics. The recruitment of participants was done after extensive information and direct invitation of community members to the focus groups and registration of all those willing to participate in the group. There was one focus group for women (7 participants) and one for men (4 participants) in the Coastei; one focus group for women (10 participants), one for men (6 participants) and one for leaders (3 participants) in the Canton; one focus group for women (9 participants), one for men (7 participants) and one for leaders (2 participants) in the Dallas.

The consultation organized specifically for the Rampa community (April 2016, Pata-Rât Mobile Unit) revealed that the type of intervention proposed in the Pata-Cluj project—relying on family-based intervention and housing in individual apartments—does not correspond to their family and community needs. This result indicates that a specially designed project and intervention is needed to re-house the Rampa community which allows communal living and animal farming in a rural environment. Therefore, the members of the Rampa community did not participate in the survey, nor did they apply to the social housing units in the first Pata Cluj project.

In the second project, a question was introduced in the interview guide regarding the support needs of the families in case of moving out of Pata-Rât.

### **3. Results of Survey 1. (Pata-Cluj) and Survey 2. (Pata2.0) on Key Housing Criteria**

#### *3.1. Research Population*

In Survey 1, a total of 219 families were interviewed (111 from the Cantonului, 65 from the Dallas and 47 from the Coastei community) and 789 proposals were collected.

In Survey 2, a total of 282 structured interviews were conducted, 134 in the Cantonului street area, 95 in the Dallas and 53 in the Coastei area, and 893 proposals were collected.

As the Pata-Cluj research did not survey the Rampa community for the reasons mentioned earlier, the results of the Pata 2.0 survey are presented only for the Cantonului, Dallas and Coastei communities.

#### *3.2. Presentation of Criteria Resulting from Survey 1*

The respondents were asked to indicate five criteria they find important when distributing the social housing units. They could provide answers freely, no list of possible criteria was read to them. The collected proposals were grouped into criteria regarding the sustainability of housing (which involve raising the chances of families with more resources, who can maintain an apartment) and criteria centred around needs (granting more chances to those who are the most in need for an apartment). A total of 24.41% of the responses were related to needs and 75.59% to resources. The most important resource consisted in the capacity of the family to integrate into a community, which is included under the



Socially sensitive, non-aggressive behaviour category. A total of 15.72% of the proposals were characteristics which could be coded under this category (civilized, observing quiet hours, able to adapt, showing respect for others, lack of criminal record, etc.)

The data in Table 1 show that the second most important resource for the community is the way in which the family takes care of their home or living space (13.43% of the responses were grouped under this category) while living in Pata-Rât. The enumerated characteristics were: taking care of their shacks, cleaning the house, cleaning the territory around the shacks, etc.

**Table 1.** The frequencies of various criteria in Pata-Rât and its three communities in 2016.

Needs/Sustainability	Criteria	Cantonului		Coastei		Dallas		In Pata-Rât	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Needs	Family	30	7.50	12	7.41	38	16.74	80	10.14
	Income (low)	20	5.00	6	3.70	11	4.85	37	4.69
	Living conditions	21	5.25	6	3.70	9	3.96	36	4.56
	Health and disability	15	3.75	6	3.70	7	3.08	28	3.55
	Evacuations	6	1.50					6	0.76
	Lack of documents	1	0.25	3	1.85	1	0.44	5	0.63
	Other	1	0.25	1	0.62		0.00	2	0.25
	Needs total	94	23.50	34	20.99	66	29.07	194	24.59
Sustainability	Socially Sensitive behaviour	58	14.50	13	8.02	53	23.35	124	15.72
	Taking care of the home	52	13.00	29	17.90	25	11.01	106	13.43
	Income	58	14.50	21	12.96	25	11.01	104	13.18
	Employment	58	14.50	19	11.73	27	11.89	104	13.18
	Trustworthiness (paying the bills)	27	6.75	19	11.73	14	6.17	60	7.60
	Education	24	6.00	18	11.11	12	5.29	54	6.84
	Documents	15	3.75	2	1.23			17	2.15
	Family	5	1.25	3	1.85			8	1.01
	Health	5	1.25	1	0.62	2	0.88	8	1.01
	Parenting	1	0.25			1	0.44	2	0.25
	Other	3	0.75	3	1.85	2	0.88	8	1.01
	Resources Total	306	100.00	128	79.01	161	70.93	595	75.41
	Total	400		162	100.00	227	100.00	789	100.00

Employment (work contract, workplace, work experience, seniority at work) and a steady income (income, having enough money, etc.) were also important considerations for the members of the community (both appearing in 13.18% of the responses), with an emphasis on the importance of the sustainability aspect regarding the apartments. These categories were followed by the education of children (6.84%) and the payment of rent or debts (7.60%). All this shows that the members of the communities are aware of the resources necessary for the long-term sustenance of the apartments and for the integration into the new community of an apartment block or of a village and—at least on a declarative level—they support the relocation of the families which are perceived as “prepared” for this step. At the same time, the idea of helping the neediest appears as well.

The categories of needs considered adequate for inclusion into the criteria for obtaining an apartment were first of all those linked to family features (young people starting with 16-year-olds, families with children, single parents with children, families with foster children, old people, etc.), (10.14%). The second category of needs was linked to low income (those living on social welfare benefits, poor people, low income). The third most popular category was related to housing conditions (4.56%), with members of the community expressing the opinion that those people who live in the most inappropriate conditions (homeless, without a shack, those who never have had a property, etc.) should have priority access to social housing. The next most frequently mentioned category was linked to families affected by disabilities or chronic diseases (3.55%). We can notice that the dispersion of answers centred around needs-based access to social housing is significant, as there are several

aspects specified by a small number of people; however, we can also see the relatively significant consensus regarding the priority of families with children, as this aspect was mentioned 66 times (30% of families).

In the Cantonului community, the criteria which were the most frequently mentioned were the existence of income (58), work (58), socially sensitive and non-aggressive behaviour (58), and the adequate maintenance of the house (52).

In the Coastei community, just as in Cantonului, the existence of income and work were considered the most important conditions for obtaining an apartment (21, 19). These criteria were followed by the ability to take care of the apartment (29), paying the bills on time (19) and children's education (18). The hierarchy of choices reflects the specific features of this community with its members living in the modular buildings provided by the Municipality following their eviction from the Coastei street. The families in this community contribute monthly to maintaining the apartments, and with a relatively recent history of living in the city, their children are enrolled in school at the largest rate of all the communities in Pata-Rât.

In the Dallas community, socially sensitive behaviour was most frequently mentioned, in the answers of 53 families from a total number of 64. This was followed by the considerations regarding income and employment which were mentioned almost at the same rate (25—employment and 27—income). Family characteristics (38) and the maintenance of the house (25) were other considerations that members of this community found important.

By comparing these three communities, we can see that the earning of an income and the maintenance of the apartments were considered important criteria by all three communities. Socially sensitive and non-aggressive behaviour was mentioned among the first three criteria in the Cantonului and Dallas communities, violence being among the hugest problems in the Cantonului area, while Dallas is characterized by strong, dictatorial leadership. Family features, the only category related to needs, were mentioned 38 times by the respondents from Dallas, while paying bills on time and children's education were among the most frequently mentioned criteria in the Coastei community.

### *3.3. Presentation of Criteria Resulting from Survey 2*

The proceedings were the same as in Survey 1. After creating the database of the answers transcribed verbatim, a secondary processing was carried out, and the answers were re-coded.

As in the case of the survey carried out in 2020, the collected proposals were grouped into criteria regarding the sustainability of housing (which involve raising the chances of families with more resources, who can maintain an apartment) and criteria centred around needs (improving the chances of those most in need of social housing). A total of 33.26% of the responses were related to needs and 66.74% to resources. The most important resources referred to employment (112) and income (112), followed by the socially sensitive behaviour category: 106 proposals mentioned characteristics which could be coded under this category. Data in Table 2 show that the next important resource for the community is the way in which the family takes care of their home or living space (102 of the answers were grouped under this category) while living in Pata-Rât. These categories were followed by the education of children (52) and the payment of rent or debts (67). Criteria which sustain the idea of giving priority to the neediest appear in 33.26% of the responses. The categories of needs considered adequate for inclusion into the criteria for obtaining an apartment were first of all those linked to family conditions (142). Among the components of this category, the number of children were mentioned by a high percent of respondents (60 persons). Living conditions was the second important criterion related to needs, with 58 responses referring to the number of years spent in the community. The third most frequently mentioned criterion is related to health and disability, more specifically the presence of disabilities or chronic diseases in families (25). Other categories were: evictions (5), lack of work (2) and other (30, for example the community members quite frequently

proposed to exclude families whose members previously benefited from a social housing unit in the Pata Cluj project).

**Table 2.** The frequencies of various criteria in Pata-Rât and its three communities in 2020.

Needs/Sustainability	Criteria	Cantonului		Dallas		Coastei		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Needs related criteria	Family	56	13.49	47	16.55	39.00	20.10	142.00	15.90
	Living conditions	46	11.08	6	2.11	6.00	3.09	58.00	6.49
	Disability and health	27	6.51	6	2.11	10.00	5.15	25.00	2.80
	Lack of income	8	1.93	7	2.46	2.00	1.03	17.00	1.90
	Evictions	4	0.96	0	0.00	1.00	0.52	5.00	0.56
	Unemployment	1	0.24	1	0.35	0.00	0.00	2.00	0.22
	Other	9	2.17	5	1.76	16.00	8.25	30.00	3.36
	Needs total	151	36.39	72	25.35	74.00	38.14	297.00	33.26
Resources related criteria	Employment	55	13.25	33	11.62	24.00	12.37	112.00	12.54
	Income	47	11.33	34	11.97	31.00	15.98	112.00	12.54
	Socially sensitive behaviour	57	13.73	44	15.49	5.00	2.58	106.00	11.87
	Taking care of the living space	51	12.29	42	14.79	9.00	4.64	102.00	11.42
	Trustworthiness (Paying the bills)	25	6.02	25	8.80	17.00	8.76	67.00	7.50
	Education	13	3.13	17	5.99	22.00	11.34	52.00	5.82
	Family	1	0.24	1	0.35	4.00	2.06	6.00	0.67
	Parenting	3	0.72	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	3.00	0.34
	Health	1	0.24	1	0.35	0.00	0.00	2.00	0.22
	Other	11	2.65	15	5.28	8.00	4.12	34.00	3.81
	Resources Total	264	63.61	212	74.65	120.00	61.86	596.00	66.74
Total	415	100.00	284	100.00	194.00	100.00	100.00	893.00	

Note: The numbers represent how frequently certain criteria were mentioned by the respondents, when they were asked to indicate the most grounded (adequate) criteria to be applied in the selection of applicants for social housing.

If we compare the three communities, we can see the same tendencies, compared with the survey carried out in 2016: education is important in the Coastei community which is the newest among the three groups (since 2010), socially sensitive behaviour is important mainly in Dallas (which is the oldest among the three communities) and Coastei, whereas taking care of certain family related conditions (big families with many children, elderly, couples without children, etc.) tend to become more important in Coastei, as compared with the research carried out in 2016.

#### 4. Results on the Development of Housing Support Services

##### 4.1. Community Consultations on Key Requirements of Adequate Housing

The community consultations carried out in all four Pata-Rât colonies between 2012 and 2014<sup>1</sup> (in the frames of a project delivered under the United Nations Development Program) identified the following needs related to decent housing for the Cantonului, Coastei and Dallas communities: Spatial integration: living in integrated areas of the city, together with the majority population; decent housing, with access to public services (water, electricity, sewage, heating, public transportation); safe housing: stable (permanent) accommodation in a safe environment; the proximity of schools, health services and workplaces; moving away from Pata-Rât has to be by choice in order not to re-enact the forced relocations of the past; availability of the option to live in a rural area; support in ensuring the means for the upkeep of the new apartments, including employment services; support in developing good relationships with the neighbours belonging to the majority population. The components (focusing housing, social assistance, educational, employment and cultural components) of the Pata-Cluj project were built upon these results.

## 4.2. Results of the Focus Groups on Services for Sustainable Housing

### 4.2.1. Support Needed before Moving

Participants mentioned the need of assistance related to obtaining identity papers and birth certificates, finding employment, means of increasing their income, support for mothers in parenting (providing information on child nurturing and health issues, parental practices); taking care of children in case the mother has a job; prevention of drug abuse and intervention in cases of addiction, school drop-out, etc.

### 4.2.2. Support Needed after Moving

Various domains were mentioned where participants expect to need support in case of rehousing: support in developing good relationships with the new neighbours and the new community; support for furnishing the apartment and installing the appliances; support regarding the payment of housing expenses; support in order to transfer the social benefits of those who will move to the countryside to the local social service provider; employment services; transportation for employees to work and children to school if needed; after school services for pupils; assistance with child rearing for working mothers; support in the transfer of children from their former school/kindergarten to new institutions; needs concerning health—due to the extremely harmful living conditions, there is a substantial need for health-care and psychological services; psychological support for children with addiction problems and/or behavioural issues at risk of school drop-out. The necessity of monitoring families and their instruction for ‘attitude adjustment’ were expressed only by the community leaders and were motivated by the perceived lack of certain abilities. Control by the state and by the community leaders were seen as being in the best interest of the families. They considered it important to have training in order to learn certain attitudes and to observe the rules of the tenants’ community (“observing quiet hours”<sup>2</sup>, paying the bills on time, good housekeeping, proper maintenance of the apartments).

### 4.2.3. Rent and Costs of Utilities

Most of the participants expressed their wish to pay affordable rent and utilities. The idea of income-coordinated rent and the necessity to pay for the consumption of utilities were considered fair.

### 4.2.4. Apartment/Housing Types

With only a few exceptions (mostly elderly persons wishing to live with their extended families), most of the participants, expressed their wish to live in different areas of the city, interspersed with the majority population. Their preferred apartment structure reflects these preferences: the focus groups participants opted for apartments designed for families with three or four children, with a living room and a kitchen, a bedroom for parents, common rooms for same-sex children, rooms with separate entrances, and a bathroom.

In the frame of Survey 2, the issue of housing sustainability was also addressed through the question ‘If you were granted a social apartment, what would your family need in order to keep it?’ The answers are presented in the table below.

Table 3 synthesises the different kinds of support the families would need in order to be able to keep the apartments. The majority of the respondents (55%) declared that they would need assistance in moving from Pata-Rât to the social housing unit, both in terms of logistics (i.e., transport) and in solving administrative issues (concluding contracts with service providers, renewing identity cards, etc.). A total of 26.2% of the respondents stated that “I wouldn’t need anything”. In these situations, the respondents probably intended to suggest that they do have the resources to move out ‘successfully’, anticipating increasing their chances to be among the selected families in this way. It would probably be erroneous to presume that more than a quarter of the respondents (26%) would have the resilience to move from Pata-Rât into social housing units without any form of support. The answer rather indicates the priority of housing needs compared to other needs of the inhabitants of Pata-Rât (Raț 2020). A total of 24% declared that they need help to access social benefits and

services, like obtaining a certificate of disability, identity cards, etc. A total of 21.30% of the respondents mentioned that they would need support regarding the school attendance of children (enrolling children at the school, access to educational or extracurricular services such as an after-school program, free tutoring for pupils, etc.) and 18.1% would like to have support in finding a job (Raț 2020).

**Table 3.** Support needs for sustaining the social housing.

	I Wouldn't Need Anything	Support for School Attendance	Support for Qualifying for a Job	Support for Moving, Furnishing and Installing the Apartment, Concluding Contracts with Service Providers	Support for Accessing Social Benefits and Services
Frequency	74	60	51	156	68
Percentage	26.2%	21.3%	18.1%	55.3%	24.1%

## 5. Discussion

### *Community Participation and Local Governance*

The Pata-Cluj team started the project with the conviction that all individuals have the right to adequate, affordable, and sustainable housing; the project was seen as a first step in a desegregation process. Provision of decent housing without accession criteria and ensuring the necessary support according to the needs and resources of the families, namely applying the *housing first* approach, would have been in line with the vision of the Pata-Cluj project. At the same time, the two projects managed a limited housing stock (65 housing units all together) and had to acknowledge that the current social assistance system in Romania (public and private) is not able to provide the necessary support in terms of social services and social benefits to overcome the complex vulnerability of families living in marginalised communities (Raț 2012); nor were the resources involved in the project enough to support the most vulnerable families to move out from Pata-Rât, and to be able to sustain the apartments.

In this context, these social housing interventions became problematic in many ways. The selection of a few families translates into the universal right to housing becoming an individual merit. The division of the community to the “deserving” and “undeserving” underlines the exclusion of those “undeserving” who remain in Pata-Rât. Secondly, encouraging the return of only some (better-off) families to the city and surrounding villages could deepen the impoverishment and loss of social capital of the communities in Pata-Rât. In spite of awareness of these circumstances, still the only available option was the housing ready approach.

In the vision of the Pata-Cluj project, community participation was a *sine qua non* for developing power and cultural context-aware social services. Community participation as a method was needed to understand and integrate the complex needs and visions of the community; to make the consultative processes of the housing intervention transparent and as fair as possible; to gain insight into the community dynamics and to design the process with these in mind; last but not least, to create a sense of community ownership over the process and over the development of services. Thus, community participation means going beyond the cultural differences paradigm and understanding and taking in consideration power relations between community members and local actors at every step of the process. Operationalising the voice of the community, translating it into action, without understanding context, community dynamics and power relations between community members and local actors therefore implies the risk of drowning out the voice of the recipients of the intervention. Therefore, particular emphasis had to be laid on situations where power imbalances are more subtly manifested, i.e., small-scale decisions. In fieldwork it is often encountered that those with less power struggle to share their knowledge (ground-level expertise), let alone to negotiate and translate it into actionable information. In this particular housing intervention, one example of operationalising the community voice was

using consultation when deciding on the research method to identify their preferences for the housing criteria and changing the initial plan of using focus groups to individual interviews. As a consequence, self-reflexive reworking of the framework was deemed to be necessary in order to amplify community voices. Building self-reflexivity also in the procedures of the public system is necessary to avoid the re-enactment of structural violence in otherwise benevolent social interventions. Thus, community participation should be always paired with institutional policy and operational development endeavours. At the same time, researchers argue that there is little evidence of widespread policy change and locally appropriate, diversified service delivery models as a direct result of citizen inputs to design (Kenny et al. 2015).

The fact that the housing interventions in these two projects took place outside of the public social housing scheme of the Municipality of Cluj-Napoca has several implications. On the one hand, this provided an opportunity to pilot a locally tailored allocation scheme that would be as close as possible to the ideas and needs of the target communities through the use of the community participation method. The self-reflexivity of the project (embedded in its design, operations and management) ensured the aforementioned fine-tuning of the intervention to the needs that emerged listening to the voices of the community. On the other hand, however, the missing actor—the Municipality of Cluj Napoca—had not had the chance to “learn” the participatory exercise of adjusting vision, policy making practice, operation and management to the needs of the most impoverished and segregated communities in the city. The fact that the intervention was carried out outside of the public system and, more than that, had no significant policy impact, drew the most criticism against the project. The municipality’s absence from the process, as well as the lack of interest in incorporating the lessons learnt in local policies is no accident. One of the major macro-structural determinants of the very formation of these marginalised Roma settlements, is the fact that public authorities “redefine their role on the housing area, and in this way they are produced as public actors/subjects by the neoliberal regime, while they also contribute to the formation and consolidation of the latter: they support the privatization and marketization of the domain of housing (by legislation and policies); they sustain a non-interventionist housing policy (for many times being materially interested in housing entrepreneurship); they positively value those who are able to adapt to the “free housing market”, act as “responsible” and “active” citizens, and are not dependent on social welfare and protection; they negatively value those who are not competitive on the market economy and are living under poor conditions, being dependent on social welfare” (Vincze 2013, p. 237).

Thus, in addition to the lack of adequate rights-based, anti-poverty policy the municipality of Cluj-Napoca does not intend to substantially invest in the housing stock to meet the very high housing demand of the city’s population. Without this, the current situation leaves the small number of social housing units subject to fierce competition between eligible vulnerable groups. The two social housing interventions presented in the paper can be considered affirmative measures to practically overcome the lack of involvement or even explicit resistance of the Municipality to provide decent and affordable housing options for the marginalised Roma communities from Pata Rât. In our view, the “re-creation of the status quo of separation of Pata-Rât from the rest of the city” (Bădiță and Vincze 2019, p. 22) is therefore rooted in the position of the Municipality in relation to Pata-Rât, identified by Vincze above as a macro-structural determinant of the formation of marginalised Roma settlements.

Despite the evident downside indicated above, operating outside of the public system was also one of the project’s strengths. The Pata-Cluj project was not intended to “privatize” either the issue of social housing or the social apartments as such, but to use the flexibility of the project’s framework for experimentation in a short period of time, which would have been much more troublesome in the public sector. Since Pata-Cluj was designed as a pilot, it was possible to try out and re-plan interventions. The drawbacks are that the results, as well as the concepts, methods and tools developed under the project, had as of yet no

impact on the public social housing system in the city. This is also indicated by the fact that the next intervention, despite the success of Pata-Cluj, is also project-based (Pata 2.0), without any financial investment on behalf of the municipality.

How preferences for social housing accession criteria have changed for the marginalised communities in Pata-Rât between 2016 and 2020?

The Pata-Rât communities had faced significant challenges between 2016 and 2020, changes which are reflected in the proposals of the community members regarding selection criteria. Preferences shifted towards the needs-related criteria in 2020 and showed a decreasing rate of most of the main resource-related criteria, like work, income and education. In our opinion, the reasons are complex. First of all, 35 resourceful families left the community in 2017. Second, there was no significant social support available in the community for about 2 years after the end of the Pata-Cluj project, until the start of the Pata 2.0. Additionally, last, but not least the economic and social crisis generated by the COVID-19 pandemic has severely affected the communities in Pata-Rât, exacerbating isolation and deepening poverty. We can see an increase in the number of households between 2016 and 2020, due to families staying at home due to the mobility restrictions in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

If we compare the numbers, we can detect that the preferences for criteria reflecting needs and vulnerabilities increased from 24.59% in 2016 to 33.26% in 2020. Almost all of the resources-related criteria decreased (employment, income, socially sensitive behaviour, education), except paying the rent and bills, which more or less remained the same. Regarding the categories related to needs, the rate of proposals giving priority to vulnerable family situations increased, and the number of children became very important in this survey. The rate of criteria reflecting precarious living conditions increased as well, especially the years spent in Pata-Rât. The shifting of the proposals from 2020 toward needs, as compared to proposals gathered in 2016 points to changes in the resources available to the community: losing of jobs, increase of unemployment and difficulties regarding school attendance of children in the circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The extremely high rate of preference for socially accepted behaviour in the first survey reflects primarily the desire of the community to be accepted by the majority population, as some of the community members clearly formulated it during community consultations: to be the ambassadors of the people of Pata-Rât in the city.

The research emphasizes the need for coupling housing interventions with consistent social support. In our case, the accession system balanced the resource factors and vulnerability factors, partly following the vision of the communities (as expressed in the surveys) but giving more weight to vulnerability factors. As resource-linked indicators were overall over-represented in the accession system (with different degrees in the two projects), neither project was able to meet the housing needs of the most vulnerable families. The accession system prioritised the families requiring lower intensity social assistance, which was available at the time of project implementation.

The accession system, besides the evident constraint to be used as a tool for selecting the beneficiaries for the few available social apartments, was developed with the explicit goal to be applied as a complex assessment tool for social service providers to be able to realistically plan the development of their services, and the individual care plans for families in situations of extreme poverty and marginalisation. Both the results of the focus groups and the surveys highlight the complex needs families face in the context of living in social exclusion, in the context of preparing to move in social apartments and sustaining a social apartment in an integrated environment. Financial and social needs are equally important. Thus, the availability of interventions from the professionals both before and after moving, in order to provide support in multiple fields is paramount: support in children's education and support in finding a job are obvious ones, but developing parental capacities and resource administration skills, financial support for crisis situations, logistical support, conflict resolution, supporting the families to build new relationships in the neighbourhood are needed just as much. In some situations, the supply of adequate

housing would be sufficient for the social inclusion of families. In other cases, social inclusion is conditional on the effectiveness of social assistance—based on decent housing conditions, including support services and social transfers (Tonk et al. 2017a).

Community participation as a working tool both for the policy makers and service providers is important in understanding the changing needs of the families they target with their interventions. Building in participatory mechanisms, reflexive policy making and self-reflexivity in service delivery are the main lessons for public institutions.

## 6. Limitations

The main limitation of the research is that it lacks empirical data regarding the impact of COVID-19 on the Pata-Rât communities. Thus, the conclusions on the relationship between the change in preferences regarding social housing accession criteria and the impact of the COVID-19 is hypothetical. Another limitation of the research is that for maximising confidentiality in relation to the respondents, socio-demographic data were not registered. Thus, the interpretation of the results cannot be supported by a more nuanced analysis.

## 7. Conclusions

When people are forced to live in such highly polluted, contaminated, and ecologically inferior places as Pata-Rât, deprived of basic human necessities, this inevitably leads to powerlessness, loss of resources, loss of hope, and consequently, lack of investment in the future. Keeping themselves at subsistence level in these extremely harsh circumstances requires immense effort on behalf of the residents. Notwithstanding the success of numerous families living in the area in keeping their jobs and educating their children with the admirable mobilisation of family and individual resilience, they obviously lack the economic, psychological, and political power to desegregate themselves and therefore they need help from the majority, from the government and from the NGOs. While many local as well as international human rights organisations did very important work involving themselves in activism for the desegregation of the area, preparing in a way the possibility to start the process, it de facto started with the two Pata projects. As a result, the lives of the 65 beneficiary families (housing and other services) were tremendously impacted by the project in the Pata-Rât communities. They were empowered through shared ownership and some hope was restored for the possibility of another future, involving decent human conditions. At the same time, for the local authorities or skeptical members of the majority, it served as a model for realistic ways and methodologies of a successful desegregation. It is imperative that desegregation investments continue and be included among the first-order priorities of central and local authorities, NGOs, and human rights activists. Desegregation investments which target only a small number of families easily end up in increased segregation for those who remain in the community, while resources decrease and level of poverty increases for those who remain longer in the community. Since slum upgrading is not an option for this kind of an urban slum, powerful housing projects are needed instead. Not top-down initiatives, but real involvement of the communities. As we saw in our projects, even the most resourceful families need services and goods like assistance with contracting utility companies, support in dealing with neighbours, basic furniture, transportation, etc. Listening to and meeting their needs, taking their choices into account, empowering the community by sharing ownership, and providing adequate services sensitive to the community's needs should be among the basic ingredients of a successful desegregation initiative. Certainly, community participation as well as institutional reflexivity and responsiveness must be incorporated in an overarching anti-oppressive practice which is concerned with eradicating social injustice perpetuated by societal structural inequalities.



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## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Preparatory Phase for Model Project: making the most of EU Fund for Sustainable Housing and Inclusion of disadvantaged Roma (explicitly but not exclusively targeted) in Cluj Metropolitan Area, implemented in 2012 and the “Area-Based Interventions for making the most of EU Fund for Sustainable Housing and Inclusion of disadvantaged Roma in pilot areas in Romania & across the border to Serbia, Macedonia and Turkey”, implemented between July 2013–May 2014. Both projects were financed by the Open Society Foundation Making the Most of EU Funds for Roma Program and implemented by the Cluj Local Team of the United Nations Development Programme in partnership with the Municipality of Cluj. The interventions carried out in the framework of the two projects are recognized by the Council of Europe as demonstrated good practices.
- <sup>2</sup> A traditional internal regulation of residential buildings with multiple apartments: at certain daily intervals the tenants are required to avoid making noises.

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