

★ Housing and social supervision of asylum seekers from the roma community of Kosovo

FRANCE

CCAS de Tours

Starting date : 01/07/2006

Context

A shantytown in the neighbourhood of the city was gathering 70 persons from the roma community (including 32 children, 14 teenagers of age, a pregnant woman and a grand-mother). Because of the sanitary, hygiene and security conditions on place, the competent authorities took the decision to close it rapidly and to organize a temporary housing of these persons in a place better adapted, with bungalows, heating, electricity, toilets, water and containers of garbage cans.

These persons from the roma community were asylum seekers from Kosovo and protected by the High Committee of refugees from the European union that give them the right not to be expelled. However, their situation does not give them the right to access to minimum social rights, neither to work. The majority of adults have an invitation to leave the territory, others have received a notification refusing their stay on the territory and others have received an order to be sent out to the frontier and are still being in procedure to have their situation re-examined.

In spite of meeting with the prefecture, the situation of these families has no progress in term of evolution of their unfavourable status "no possibility for regularization, no possible eviction"

In this context, the local social action and welfare community centres (CCAS) from Tours, ensure the follow-up of these persons and their housing in bungalows with the aim to find them a sustainable lodging, adapted to their habits in order to close rapidly the site which cannot last longer due to the existing infrastructures and its population.

Description

The objective of the CCAS is to find gradually a lodging for each person, regarding her social situation and her abilities of integration in a collective lodging, after the conclusion of a booking agreement. The follow – up was previously realized by an local NGO which give up from the project. The CCAS decided to manage the project with the help of a social worker and the participation of voluntary nurses (from the red cross and the "restos du Coeur"). It consists on different aspects :

Social support

The CCAS, regarding the disengagement of the local NGO, react rapidly by the recruitment in July 2009 of a social worker who was in charge of the follow-up of the social situation of those persons on a full-time basis. The person went regularly on the site to meet the families and discussed with them about the procedures to be undertaken (domiciliation to the CCAS), the establishment of a list of the family's needs (alimentation, clothes, medical help...) and to look after their social integration (scholarship, French language learning , hygiene's practices...). The regular presence of the CCAS on the places gave an opportunity to better know the families and to be recognized by those ones for the work realized all-together.

Social optional help

These families without any legal financial means, so the CCAS allow them each month "personalized cheques" regarding the members of the family and its needs. The department which does not agree at the beginning to give a support on a monthly basis is now changing its mind and the help for families is now more consequent.

Food distribution

At the opening of the « Gloriette site », a partnership between the CCAS and the « Restos du cœur » was launched in order to ensure a weekly food distribution. The distributed food comes from supermarkets and gives a diverse and qualitative food. The CCAS is in charge of the organisation of the distribution in the better conditions.

Schooling

The schooling of children is essential to facilitate their integration and the administrative procedures of families within the prefecture. After unsuccessful attempts, the social worker adjusted the work to make the children and the family conscious of the benefit to go to school. The main barrier to schooling was the mobility. So, a "school allowance" was given to the family to encourage their children to go to school more often.

Medical supervision

A voluntary nurse from the red cross visits each week the inhabitants of the "Gloriette site". When a special medical need is necessary, she referred the patient to a specialist and a trainee go together with the patient to the visit.

The maintain of the cleanliness of the site

The site was not maintain in order and the basic sanitary rules were not respected. The CCAS requested the cleaning services of the city in order to organise cleaning days in which the inhabitants take part. Cleaning products are distributed and a planning for the cleaning of the bungalows prepared to keep the site existing.

RESOURCES

Human resources of the CCAS

- An executive manager for the coordination of the site
- A social worker at part-time for the social supervision of asylum seekers
- Technical services for the work on the site

Estimated budget:

around 18 000 euros per month

ASSESSMENT

The disengagement of the NGO in charge of the social supervision, the cultural and language barriers, the existing tensions between families and the lack of community spirit, the violent acting and the drunk influence of some persons, the sanitary conditions and lack of hygiene on the site, the unclear administrative situation of these asylum seekers, the systematic arrival of new persons on the site... All those difficulties to be faced and that we have never encountered before, because of the social emergency (humanitarian to asylum seekers), give us the constant self questioning on our action and the manner we were doing things.

Nevertheless, our permanent presence on the site, the work done in coordination with operational partners and the work done by the social worker within the families gave us the opportunity to be recognised and appreciated by those one. It gave us a possibility to work in close cooperation with each family and to progress on their individual situation.

We have registered with a high satisfaction the schooling of children on the period of 2007/2008 because of the work done with the parents, and also because of the closing of the Gloriette site and the moving of the whole population to the ADOMA residence on 31st July 2008.

CCAS evaluation

The care for asylum seekers, especially with a specific status, is not a direct competence from the CCAS. The lack of experience, the lack of knowledge of the culture of the roma population, the numerous difficulties encountered in the management of the roma camp and the importance of the financial cost of such project were all factors to make us give up the project and to let the competent authorities take care of the population. Nevertheless our implication in the action, with our partners, gave us a possibility to develop real links with the roma population. Today, families are living in collective housing without any notification of occurrence or even complaining. The children go to school and the inhabitants would like to be better integrated in the agglomeration in an autonomous way.

As a proof, a family has obtained a authorization of stay with an authorization of work, because the father got a job on a long term basis.

CONTACT

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